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US FOREIGN POLICY

3rd EDITION

Michael Cox & Doug Stokes

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US Foreign Policy

More praise for *US Foreign Policy*

Here is a volume which, in scope and depth, offers insight into the character of American foreign policy today. By placing a regional and topical series of chapters into a historical context, this distinguished group of scholars take us back in time, offering a context in which to place current debates over the logic and likely future course of America in world affairs. This book is a must-read for all students of the subject.

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US Foreign Policy

THIRD EDITION

Edited by

Michael Cox

Director
LSE IDEAS

Doug Stokes

Professor of international relations and
Director of the centre for advanced
international studies at the
university of Exeter, UK

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New to this edition

- Fully updated to cover Obama's second term and President Trump's evolving foreign policy, helping students to understand the dynamics of contemporary US foreign policy
- New chapters on gender, religion, the Asia-Pacific, and the liberal international order respond to developments in the field, to enable students to consider the full impact of, and factors affecting, US foreign policy

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Doug Stokes is Professor of International Relations, Director of the Centre for Advanced International Studies, and Faculty Director of Post-Graduate Research at the University of Exeter. He specializes in US foreign policy, international security, and debates on grand strategy and has published a number of books, journal articles, and book chapters in these areas. He has also advised and presented his research to a range of UK government organizations and agencies and is Senior Associate Fellow at the Royal United Services Institute, a leading defence think tank based in Whitehall.

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Guided tour of textbook features

This book is enriched with a number of learning tools to help you navigate the text and reinforce your knowledge of US foreign policy. This guided tour shows you how to get the most out of your textbook as a complete learning resource.

I will help take your pain away by working to make your lives better again (Key quotes 5.11).

KEY QUOTES 5.11: OBAMA ON TRUMP

There's going to be the potential for anger, frustration, fear—some of it justified but just misdirected. I think somebody like Mr Trump's taking advantage of that. That's what he's been exploiting during the course of his campaign

(President Barack Obama interview, December 2015)

Key quotes

Quotations from major figures to help you to gain a wider perspective on the issues being discussed.

19.1 MAJOR DEBATES AND THEIR IMPACT: IRAQ – JUS

- The Bush administration's given rationale for war was that following 9/11 America had to embark on a 'global war on terror' to defeat its enemies. Iraq, under Saddam Hussein, was alleged to be developing weapons of mass destruction, which posed a threat to American interests in the region and could fall into the hands of al-Qaeda.
- 'Just war' tradition seeks to provide a moral and ethical compass for warfare. In the decision to go to war (*jus ad bellum*)

Major debates and their impact

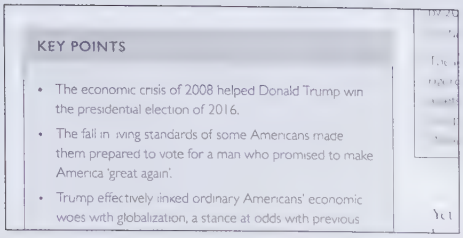
Throughout the book, details of some of the ongoing major debates are provided to show you the most up-to-date state of academic thought in the area.

CONTROVERSIES 3.1: IDEALISM IN AMERICAN FOREIG

One of the exceptional features of US foreign policy is the extent to which values affect it. A consistent debate in American foreign policy is what role values should play in foreign policy decision making. One perspective is that values should be the driving force in determining the policies that the USA pursues. From this perspective, US foreign policy should be based on a sincere commitment to values such as democracy, human rights, rule of law and economic opportunity. The rationale for this

Controversies

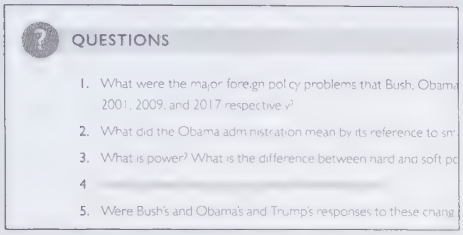
Each controversy presented shows an aspect of foreign policy from a different angle, highlighting the complexities of subjectivism in the area.


KEY POINTS

- The economic crisis of 2008 helped Donald Trump win the presidential election of 2016.
- The fall in living standards of some Americans made them prepared to vote for a man who promised to make America 'great again'.
- Trump effectively linked ordinary Americans' economic woes with globalization, a stance at odds with previous

Key points

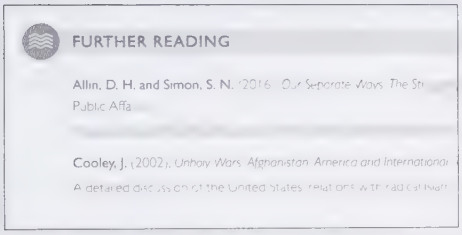
Lists of key points give brief synopses of the material just covered in order to help you consolidate your studies.


QUESTIONS

1. What were the major foreign policy problems that Bush, Obama 2001, 2009, and 2017 respectively?
2. What did the Obama administration mean by its reference to sm
3. What is power? What is the difference between hard and soft po
4.
5. Were Bush's and Obama's and Trump's responses to these chang

Questions

A set of carefully devised questions has been provided in each chapter to help you assess your comprehension of core themes. These may also be used as the basis of seminar discussion and coursework.


FURTHER READING

Allin, D. H. and Simon, S. N. (2016). *Our Separate Ways: The Str*
Public Affa

Cooley, J. (2002). *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International*
A detailed discussion of the United States' relationships with radical Islam

Further reading

Further reading lists at the end of each chapter help you to extend your learning; follow these suggestions to find out more about the issues raised in each chapter and to explore the relevant academic literature.

Guided tour of online resources

US Foreign Policy is also accompanied by online resources that provide students and lecturers with ready-to-use teaching and learning resources. These resources are designed to provide a complete package to lecturers and students to enhance the learning experience.

www.oup.com/uk/cox_stokes3e/

For students

Interactive map

An interactive map containing details of US foreign policy in relation to countries and regions worldwide provides a visual aid when considering the geographical implications of policy.

Multiple-choice questions

Multiple-choice questions test and reinforce your understanding of the themes. They are self-marking and allow you to receive immediate feedback to help you to direct your studies.

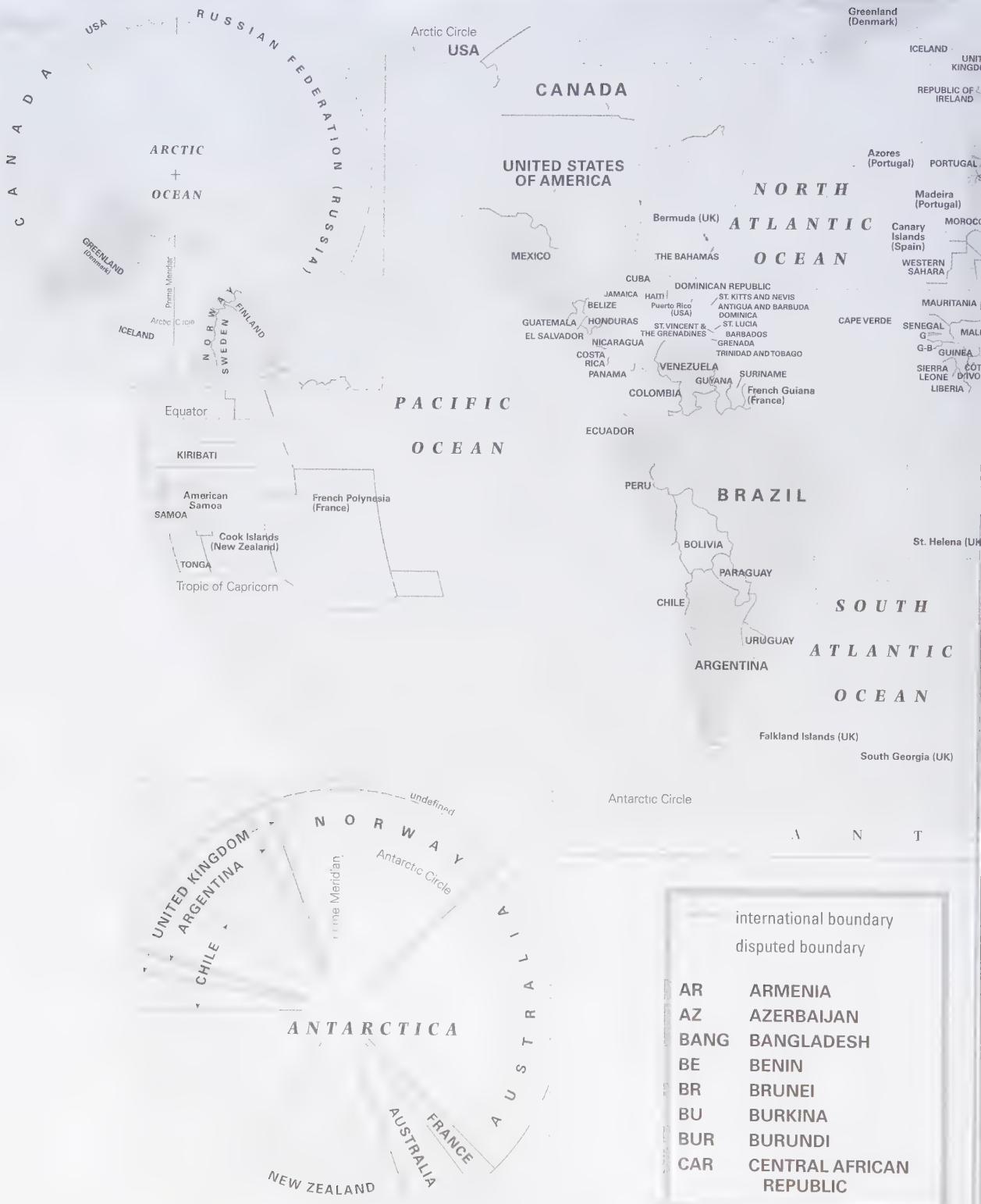
For lecturers

Essay questions and class activities

A suite of questions drawing on themes in each chapter of the text provides an excellent basis for assessing students' understanding of the key points.

Seminar questions and activities

A collection of activities to assist in planning seminars.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PACIFIC
OCEAN
Arctic Circle
USA
CANADA
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
MEXICO
Bermuda (UK)
THE BAHAMAS
CUBA
JAMAICA
HAITI
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
Puerto Rico (USA)
ST. KITTS AND NEVIS
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
DOMINICA
BELIZE
GUATEMALA
HONDURAS
EL SALVADOR
NICARAGUA
ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES
ST. LUCIA
BARBADOS
GRENADA
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
COSTA RICA
PANAMA
VENEZUELA
GUYANA
SURINAME
COLOMBIA
French Guiana (France)
ECUADOR
PERU
BRAZIL
BOLIVIA
PARAGUAY
CHILE
URUGUAY
ARGENTINA
NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN
SOUTH ATLANTIC OCEAN
Greenland (Denmark)
ICELAND
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
Azores (Portugal)
PORTUGAL
Madeira (Portugal)
Canary Islands (Spain)
WESTERN SAHARA
MAURITANIA
CAPE VERDE
SENEGAL
GUINEA
SIERRA LEONE
LIBERIA
St. Helena (UK)
Falkland Islands (UK)
South Georgia (UK)
Antarctic Circle
undefined
NORWAY
Antarctic Circle
Prime Meridian
UNITED KINGDOM
ARGENTINA
CHILE
ANTARCTICA
AUSTRALIA
FRANCE
AUSTRALIA
NEW ZEALAND
international boundary
disputed boundary
AR ARMENIA
AZ AZERBAIJAN
BANG BANGLADESH
BE BENIN
BR BRUNEI
BU BURKINA
BUR BURUNDI
CAR CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

G	THE GAMBIA
G-B	GUINEA-BISSAU
IS	ISRAEL
L	LEBANON
Q	QATAR
R	RWANDA
T	TAJIKISTAN
TU	TURKMENISTAN
U	UGANDA
UAE	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
ZIM	ZIMBABWE

HAWAII
WASHINGTON
OREGON
IDAHO
PACIFIC
OCEAN
NEVADA
UTAH
UNIT
CALIFORNIA
ARIZONA
ALASKA

NTANA
NORTH DAKOTA
MINNESOTA
SOUTH DAKOTA
OMING
NEBRASKA
IOWA
WISCONSIN
MICHIGAN
ILLINOIS
INDIANA
OHIO
PENNSYLVANIA
NEW YORK
VT.
N.H.
MAINE
MA.
RHODE ISLAND
CONNECTICUT
NEW JERSEY
MD.
DELAWARE
WEST VIRGINIA
VIRGINIA
DLORADO
KANSAS
MISSOURI
KENTUCKY
NORTH CAROLINA
ATES OF AMERICA
TENNESSEE
SOUTH CAROLINA
OKLAHOMA
ARKANSAS
MS.
ALABAMA
GEORGIA
NEW EXICO
TEXAS
LOUISIANA
FLORIDA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Gulf of Mexico
MA. MASSACHUSETTS
MD. MARYLAND
MS. MISSISSIPPI
N.H. NEW HAMPSHIRE
VT. VERMONT

1

Introduction: US foreign policy—past, present, and future

Michael Cox and Doug Stokes

When we brought out the second edition of this textbook in 2012 the United States faced a series of quite extraordinary foreign policy challenges. Two wars in the Middle East had been fought at huge cost, neither leading to a successful political outcome with which the US could in any way feel comfortable. The US meanwhile appeared to have no serious answer to the crisis then beginning to unfold in Syria. At home it was struggling to put its own economic house in order following the great crash of 2008. And to add to America's many troubles, Russia under Putin was starting to flex its diplomatic and military muscle, China was becoming ever more assertive in its own 'near abroad' in the South and East China seas, while the US's richest and most reliable allies across the Atlantic in Europe seemed to be incapable of solving their own problems. Yet in 2012 at least the hand of Barack Obama remained on the tiller of the state, while the US's foreign policy team—led by the secretary of state, Hillary Clinton—was slowly but surely adjusting to a world where it was becoming clear to at least some analysts that America could no longer run the world alone. And even if the times were challenging, the Obama team still managed to chalk up some important foreign policy breakthroughs, first normalizing relations with Cuba in 2014, then working alongside allies in signing an agreement blocking Iran's nuclear programme in the middle of the following year, and finally in December 2015 pushing hard to achieve a climate change deal in Paris. The Obama economic team also brought about what had, back in 2008 and 2009, seemed unlikely if not impossible: some kind of economic recovery in the United States itself.

Many things have changed since 2012, arguably little of which have made the world either a more stable or a more secure place. But few could have predicted that one of the new sources of uncertainty would be coming from within the United States itself. This new edition of the book is not just about the quite unexpected election of Donald Trump. Indeed, it deals with nearly every aspect of US foreign policy and not only the most recent events. But Trump's victory in November in 2016 was a tipping point in nearly every way. Few people after all expected Trump to get the Republican nomination in the first place. Hardly anybody (except Trump it seems) then thought he could win the race to the White House. And having won against the odds, Trump set about doing what he said he would do during his tumultuous campaign: namely, tearing up the foreign policy rule book on nearly everything. New presidents always like to make a mark. But none before had made as much of a mark as Donald Trump, who having already denounced what he called the false song of 'globalism',

went on to talk about the US's traditional EU allies and the NATO alliance as if both were entirely inconsequential while at the same time threatening to wage a trade war against China. Nor did it end there. With little concern for what others around him may have thought, he went on to denounce the Iran nuclear deal, then vowed to take the US out of the Paris climate change accord, made it clear that he was not going to establish normal diplomatic relations with Cuba, and in December 2017 announced his intention to make good on his highly controversial electoral promise of moving the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Clearly this was not just a change of direction typical when a new president enters the White House. This looked like a rejection of the whole American foreign policy tradition.

But how did we arrive where we are today? Why have the great hopes engendered by the end of the Cold War—not to mention Obama's election back in 2008—not been fully realized? And where do we think the United States is going? In this completely updated third edition of our book, the editors have called upon a range of expert voices representing a spectrum of opinion drawn from four continents to reflect on these big questions. The volume does not pretend to be exhaustive. Nonetheless, it does manage to touch several intellectual bases, taking the widest possible look at US foreign policy. It also brings the story right up to date, not only in each of the new and revised chapters, but also in the concluding chapters where some of the most significant voices in the field of US foreign policy reflect on America's uncertain future. Based on the research of some of the world's leading experts, but made accessible to the general reader, this volume—wide in scope and pluralist in character—sets what we hope are new standards for discussing contemporary US foreign policy.

Let us say something briefly about the volume itself.

Perhaps the first thing the student will notice is that even though we think it important for them to have a proper grounding in the different theories of US foreign policy (which is why we were keen to include again the revised Chapter 2 by Brian Schmidt), unlike most texts on the US foreign policy we have also included a number of chapters on the history of the United States. History, after all, is not some distant place that political scientists ought to visit now and again for chunks of interesting information, but the very source we need to go back to in order to understand how a country like the United States has arrived at the destination it has and with what baggage on board. And two of the chapters here take the very long view: Chapter 4, written by Walter LaFeber, looks at the rise of the US until its emergence as a 'superpower' in 1945; and Chapter 5, an entirely new contribution by one of the editors, focuses on the political economy of the US from the colonial period right through to the Cold War and beyond to Donald Trump. Dan Deudney and Jeffrey Meiser's Chapter 3 may have only a few passing observations to make about Trump. However, the authors do explain why we must think of the United States as an exceptional kind of nation with a very distinct past and an equally distinct set of capabilities. How these capabilities have been deployed is then analysed by Rick Saull in Chapter 6 and John Dumbrell in Chapter 7, both of whom have written widely on US foreign policy, and who here bring their many insights to bear in their respective chapters covering together the years between 1945 and 2000. Still, as Joseph Nye reminds us in Chapter 8, even though these were years which finally ended in American triumph, there is no guarantee that in the twenty-first century the US will continue to deploy its considerable power as effectively or as smartly as it has appeared to do in the past.

But if an understanding of American history is crucial, so too is an understanding of how domestic politics and culture shape US choices abroad. It is perhaps too much of a cliché to say that foreign policy is merely a reflection of what happens domestically. But as many of the chapters here reveal, there is no Chinese wall dividing the international from the internal, the global from the local. This is why the volume looks in some detail at what we call here 'institutions and processes' in Section 3. This section contains three chapters. In the first, the newly commissioned Chapter 9, Valentina Aronica and Inderjeet Parmar explore the many ways in which various pressure groups and elites determine and shape what the US does internationally. Peter Trubowitz then reminds us of the importance of regional shifts and their impact on the making of US foreign policy in Chapter 10, while Piers Robinson looks at the importance of media in Chapter 11—a subject that has become all the more crucial in an age where social media appears to be playing an increasingly vital role in those discussions at home which then go on to shape, even distort, the conduct of US foreign policy.

But even if we accept that domestic politics matters, there is still a world 'out there' with which the United States has to deal. Indeed, precisely because it remains—even today—the most powerful nation in the world, there is quite literally no country or region in which it does not have an interest: and there is possibly no region in the world where its interests, as Toby Dodge shows in Chapter 12, are now being more contested than in the Middle East, still the source of much of the world's oil and much of its instability too. The US relationship with Europe might be of an altogether different and more settled character. But as Michael Smith points out in Chapter 13, Bush, Obama, and Trump have all asked questions of the Europeans that suggest a far less certain relationship going into the twenty-first century. Indeed, in Chapter 23, Stephen Walt comes close to suggesting that a transatlantic drifting apart is nearly inevitable. But if the US–European relationship might be described as uncertain, that between the United States and Russia, according to Peter Rutland in Chapter 14, has now become toxic and is bound to remain so. Meanwhile, relations between the United States and the Asia-Pacific region, according to Feng Zhang in Chapter 15, are likely to become ever more complex as both the region and China make an increasingly large impact on the international system more generally and on America's understanding of its position in the world more particularly.

The volume continues by bringing up to date previous chapters written by James Dunkerley on Latin America (Chapter 16) and Robert Patman on Africa (Chapter 17). It then examines what we call here 'key issues', two of which we have included before but here bring right up to the moment—Paul Rogers' Chapter 18 on global terrorism and Robyn Eckersley's Chapter 21 on the US and the global environment. We are delighted that two of the world's foremost experts, one dealing with gender and US foreign policy—Sylvia Bashevkin, and the other with religion and US foreign policy—Lee Marsden, have made important contributions in the form of Chapters 20 and 19 respectively. By doing so they have not only enriched this volume, but also perhaps reminded more conventional scholars that a narrowly defined notion of interest or power can capture only one part of the complex story which is American foreign policy.

Finally, we have asked a number of scholars to reflect on the future. Predictions, as they say, are something we should always avoid making. But in a world that is so uncertain and led by possibly the most divisive US president of modern times, it is perhaps more important (and more difficult) than ever to at least think about possible scenarios as we look forward into the twenty-first century. One of the great ongoing debates about the future concerns American power and whether that power is on the wane. There is no easy, or at least no agreed, answer to this very big question, as is made clear in Chapter 25 by William Wolhforth and Stephen Brooks on one side of the debate and Chris Layne on the other. Perhaps the only thing we can predict with any certainty is that this is a discussion likely to run and run. But even if there is no consensus about the future of American power, there is—as John Ikenberry reminds us in Chapter 22—the very real danger that the liberal order which the US did so much to construct after the Second World War could be about to disintegrate.

The penultimate chapter in the book, by Anatol Lieven (Chapter 24), reminds us all that we should perhaps take a more rounded view of what has been happening of late. Nations may rise and nations may decline, but whoever sits in the White House—whether it is an Obama or a Trump—they will still be guided by the same basic goal of maintaining US primacy by retaining a massive military lead over both rival and friend alike, thus ensuring that the US military will always play a central role in the conduct of US foreign policy. Furthermore, whoever 'runs' American foreign policy will continue to face the same constraints both at home and abroad. Thus we should not have been surprised, says Lieven, that the Obama administration failed to change the course of US foreign and security policy in a direction it would have liked. Nor should we be surprised if President Trump finds it almost impossible (except in some very specific areas) to reduce US international commitments, despite the radical promises and threats made during his election campaign. Whether we should be dismayed or alarmed by this is an open question. We can only hope that this volume helps students of US foreign policy come to a more informed answer.

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Theories of US foreign policy

Brian Schmidt

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Introduction

This chapter examines some of the competing theories that have been put forth to explain American foreign policy. In the quest to explain the foreign policy of the United States, a number of competing theories have been developed by international relations scholars. Some theories focus on the role of the international system in shaping American foreign policy, while others argue that various domestic factors inside the United States are the driving force. Still others attempt to combine both external and internal sources. The chapter begins with an introduction to some of the obstacles to constructing a theory of foreign policy. The following section provides a general survey of some of the competing theories of American foreign policy. The next section turns to the theoretical debate over the origins of the Cold War. The chapter concludes by examining the debate on the most appropriate grand strategy that the United States should follow in the post–Cold War era.

The task of explaining American foreign policy is infinitely complex. Part of the difficulty arises from the fact that there are so many diverse factors at play that it is often difficult to determine the underlying reason for a given policy. President Obama's decision in 2009 to

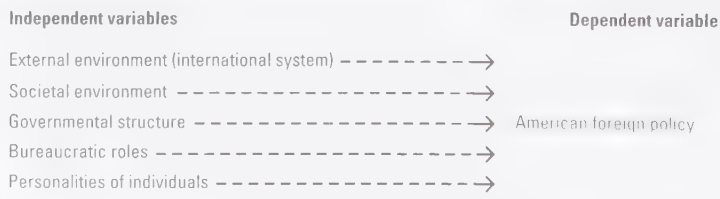
commit additional troops and resources to the war in Afghanistan clearly reveals how a complex array of factors can contribute to the creation of foreign policy. The problem confronting an analyst is what set of factors to focus on in order to explain the foreign policy behaviour of the United States. In the instance of committing troops to Afghanistan, should one focus on the personality of former President Obama and his style of decision making? Should one focus on the members of President Obama's cabinet and his inner circle of advisors? Should one focus on the alleged threat that the Taliban and al-Qaeda pose to the United States and to regional stability in Central Asia, or how President Trump may now interpret these threats differently? Or should one look inside the United States to see how the values of liberty and freedom shape the goals that America attempts to achieve in its external relations with other states in general, and with Afghanistan in particular?

As a result of this complexity, most of those who attempt to explain American foreign policy have recognized the centrality of theory. Theory is both necessary and unavoidable when it comes to understanding international politics. Theory is unavoidable because both policy makers and scholars approach the world from a specific paradigm or world view that in turn generates specific theories. Theories are necessary in that they tell us what to focus on and what to ignore. We need theories to help us organize all the information that can overwhelm us on a daily basis. While students of foreign policy recognize the centrality of theory, the goal of achieving an overarching theory to explain the foreign policy behaviour of the United States has proven to be illusive. Instead we have a number of competing theories that focus on different levels of analysis to account for the behaviour of the United States.

An insightful attempt to construct a theoretical framework for identifying the main sources of a state's foreign policy was developed by the renowned political scientist James N. Rosenau (1971). Rosenau identified five sources that potentially influence a state's foreign policy: the external environment of the international system, the domestic/societal environment of a nation state, the governmental structure that specifies the policy-making process, the bureaucratic roles occupied by individual policy makers, and finally the personal characteristics and idiosyncrasies of individual foreign policy officials and government elites (see Figure 2.1). These five sources can be considered independent variables that either individually or collectively help to explain the foreign policy behaviour of the United States, the dependent variable. This model holds that different factors are causally linked to the conduct of American foreign policy.

The external or systemic sources of foreign policy draw our attention to the point that the formulation of American foreign policy does not take place in a vacuum; rather the United States, like any other country, must take account of, and respond to, events taking place in the realm of international politics. The terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001 dramatically illustrate how an event perpetrated by an external actor, in this case by the al-Qaeda terrorist network spearheaded by Osama bin Laden, elicits a foreign policy response. The terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, DC did not determine the specific

Figure 2.1 The multiple sources of American foreign policy.



course of action that the United States decided to take—the global war on terrorism—but the event itself did necessitate a response. On any given day, numerous developments take place around the world that American foreign policy officials must respond to even if they were previously preoccupied with a different region or issue area. Moreover, as we will see, the systemic source also highlights the underlying distribution of power in the international system and the effect this has on American foreign policy.

However, many analysts insist that the internal sources of foreign policy are more important than external sources. The concept of a societal source accentuates the non-governmental aspects of a country's society that influences its foreign policy behaviour. The national character and value orientation of a country cannot be discounted, as many believe that foreign policy should seek to promote the core values and ideology of the domestic political system. Many have observed that this view has been especially strong in the case of the United States as reflected by America's liberal, democratic character and by its desire to promote this political ideology around the world (Smith 1994). Indeed, one alleged contributing factor to the decision to wage war against Iraq in 2003 was the desire on the part of the United States to spread liberty and democracy to the Middle East.

In addition to the societal sources of American foreign policy, the particular governmental structure of the United States also plays a key role in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. The Constitution of the United States establishes an elaborate, and some would argue cumbersome, framework for the formulation of foreign policy. The constitutional separation of power between the executive and legislative branches has led to what some refer to as 'an invitation to struggle' over the shaping of American foreign policy. While the Constitution grants both the executive and legislative branches specific functions in the conduct of foreign policy, the President, as both head of state and government, is often viewed as having the primary role in determining American foreign policy. Some analysts allege that this has led certain US presidents, especially during the period of the Vietnam War, to exceed the constitutional limits of their power, contributing to what Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. (1974) labelled an 'imperial presidency'.

Compared to those of other countries, the United States' political system allows for a vast array of actors to have roles in the formulation of American foreign policy. This includes the president; cabinet officials, such as the secretary of defense, secretary of state, and secretary of commerce; advisors to the president, such as the national security advisor and the director of the Central Intelligence Agency; members of the United States Congress; lobbyists, both foreign and domestic; and interest groups. This is only a partial list, and one can identify a host of additional actors that have a role in the formulation of American foreign policy.

The multitude of actors involved in the formulation of foreign policy draws our attention to the role played by large bureaucratic agencies such as the Department of Defense, the State Department, and the Central Intelligence Agency. Those who study the behaviour of bureaucratic organizations often make the point that the individuals who work for a particular agency are socialized to reflect their own agency's interests and needs. In a sense, the characteristics of the bureaucracy are more important than the characteristics and personality of the individuals. Thus even when an individual gains access to the process of foreign policy making, role theory suggests that a person's influence is circumscribed by the policy-making role they occupy. The basic insight of the 'role' source of foreign policy is captured by the adage, 'where you stand depends on where you sit'. Thus the position that a person takes on an issue of foreign policy depends on the bureaucracy that they represent.

The 'individual' source category argues quite simply that individuals—their personality, past experiences, upbringing, personal convictions—matter greatly. Since American foreign policy behaviour follows from decisions made by elites, and often by decisions made by the president of the United States, the concept of the individual source prompts us to investigate the personal characteristics of the decision maker. The thesis is that the idiosyncratic characteristics of leaders influence American foreign policy behaviour. For many, it seems impossible to explain the direction of American foreign policy without highlighting the personality traits and beliefs of the current president. This point

is all the more relevant with the election of Donald Trump, who has a set of unique personality traits and leadership qualities, as the forty-fifth president of the United States.

Rosenau's framework is a simplifying device that helps us to identify the multiple sources of American foreign policy. In this sense it fulfils one of the core functions of theory: it helps us to identify what to focus on in our attempt to explain foreign policy. But Rosenau did not provide a full-blown theory of foreign policy; rather he offered what he termed a 'pre-theory' of foreign policy. He did not specify how each of his five sources directly influences foreign policy behaviour, nor did he assess the relative influence of each of the sources. Ideally we want to know which of the sources is most important, because if we needed all five we would not have a parsimonious theory, that is, one that uses the fewest variables but nevertheless offers the most explanatory power. We might have a good description of a state's foreign policy, but we would not really have an explanatory theory. Those who have attempted to construct a theory of foreign policy have disagreed about the most important source of a state's external behaviour. We now turn to some of the theories that have been put forth to explain American foreign policy (see Key quotes 2.1).

KEY QUOTES 2.1: COMPETING THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Realism has no place for an expectation that democracies will not fight each other. To the degree we establish that peace between democracies is a fact, and are able to explain it theoretically, we build an alternative view of the world with great import for expectations and for policy.

(Russett 1993: 24)

The sad fact is that international politics has always been a ruthless and dangerous business, and it is likely to remain that way. Although the intensity of their competition waxes and wanes, great powers fear each other and always compete with each other for power.

(Mearsheimer 2001: 2)

Self-help and power politics are institutions, not essential features of anarchy. Anarchy is what states make of it.

(*Wendt* 1992: 396)

KEY POINTS

- The task of explaining foreign policy is infinitely complex.
- In order to explain foreign policy we need theory.
- James Rosenau identified five sources that influence a state's foreign policy: the international system, the societal environment of a nation state, the governmental setting, the bureaucratic roles played by policy makers, and the individual characteristics of foreign policy elites.

Theories of American foreign policy

The previous section argued that theory is essential to the task of explaining American foreign policy. Yet even if we agree that theory is necessary, this does not establish that it is possible to construct a theory of foreign policy. Kenneth Waltz (1996), one of the leading American scholars of international politics, argues that given the complexity of the process of foreign policy making, and the fact that foreign policy is shaped by both domestic and international factors, it is impossible to construct a theory of foreign policy. According to Waltz, the best that we can hope to achieve is a theory of international politics; that is, one that 'describes the range of likely outcomes of the actions and interactions of states within a given system and shows how the range of expectations varies as systems change' (Waltz 1979: 71).

Most scholars, however, want more than this—they also want to be able to explain the specific foreign policies of particular countries. Many want to know how the specific factors outlined by Rosenau are causally linked to the conduct of foreign policy. These scholars have ventured to create a theory of foreign policy, one that seeks 'to explain what states try to achieve in the external realm and when they try to achieve it' (Rose 1998: 145). Compared to a theory of international politics, which is interested in explaining general patterns of behaviour such as the causes of war, a theory of foreign policy seeks to explain why a particular state pursued a specific policy at a certain point in time. A theory of foreign policy is dedicated to answering the question of what causes a state to adopt a specific type of foreign policy.

Systemic theories

As a first cut, we can divide theories of American foreign policy into those that accentuate external or systemic factors versus those that emphasize internal or domestic factors. Here we have a profound theoretical debate over whether American foreign policy should be understood as being shaped primarily by the external or the internal environment of the United States. Those that emphasize systemic factors argue that the most important influence on American foreign policy is the international system: specifically the relative amount of power that the United States possesses at a particular point in history. According to this view, which Fared Zakaria (1992) associates with the concept of the *Primat der Aussenpolitik* (the primacy of foreign policy), a state's foreign policy is a consequence of pressures emanating from the distribution of power in the international system. In other words, the international distribution of power is an autonomous force that has a direct influence on the behaviour of states.

Defensive realism and offensive realism are two theories which argue that systemic pressures play a decisive role in shaping the foreign policy behaviour of the United States. Both theories share a common set of assumptions about the international system, which they believe greatly impacts the foreign policy behaviour of all states. First, defensive and offensive realists agree that the international system is anarchic, meaning that there is no higher authority above states. Anarchy does not mean lawlessness and chaos, but reflects the fact that there is no centralized authority in international politics. This fits logically with the second assumption that the most important actors in the international system are sovereign states. The attribute of sovereignty means that each state regards itself as the highest authority and can order its domestic affairs according to how it sees fit. A third assumption is that states act on the basis of self-help, meaning that they each must take the appropriate steps to ensure their own survival. Fourth, because both defensive and offensive realists believe that states must take the necessary steps to ensure their own survival, they argue that power is the main currency of international politics. Systemic theories argue that the key to understanding a state's foreign policy rests with its relative amount of power. The amount of power that the United States possesses compared to other states in the international system largely determines the character of its foreign policy. For realists it is a truism that capabilities (power) largely determine interests. Thus after the Second World War, as the power of the United States increased relative to that of other states, so too did its interests. The story of American foreign policy after the Second World War, according to this view, is one of an expansion of American power and interests.

Defensive realism

What effect does the international distribution of power have on the behaviour of a state's foreign policy? According to defensive realists, states are fundamentally security maximizers. The international system, according to defensive realists, only provides incentives for moderate behaviour, and expansionistic policies to achieve security are generally not required and often prove to be counterproductive. This means that in order to ensure its own survival in the self-help, anarchic international system, a prudent foreign policy for the United States is to seek only an appropriate amount of power. Defensive realists argue that expansionist and aggressive behaviour most often results in other states forming a counterbalancing coalition. As a result of the belief that states are strongly inclined to balance against aggressive powers, they are, in Joseph Grieco's terms, 'defensive positionalists' and 'will only seek the minimum level of power that is needed to attain and to maintain their security and survival' (Grieco 1997: 167). According to many defensive realists, a direct consequence of the expansionistic foreign policy that the United States pursued in the aftermath of 9/11 is that we are beginning to see an active attempt by other states to balance American power. The recent character and extent of balancing behaviour against the United States is further discussed in Controversies 2.1. In addition to the notion that such balancing inhibits an excessively power-seeking foreign policy, defensive realists introduce the concept of the offence–defence balance and argue that as a result of variables such as geography, technology, and, most importantly, military doctrine, conquest rarely pays and that security can be readily achieved under anarchy.[1]

CONTROVERSIES 2.1: BALANCING AGAINST THE UNITED STATES?

For realists, the balance of power is an enduring feature of international politics. Although various meanings have been attributed to the concept of the balance of power, the most common definition holds that if the survival of a state or a number of weak states is threatened by a hegemonic state or coalition of stronger states, they should each seek to increase their own military capabilities (internal balancing) or join forces, establish a formal alliance (external balancing), and seek to preserve their own independence by checking the power of the opposing side. The mechanism of the balance of power seeks to ensure an equilibrium of power in which case no one state or coalition of states is in a position to dominate all the others.

Today, the controversy is whether the United States is so powerful that the balance of power is no longer an operating principle of international politics. Some argue that the United States enjoys such an overwhelming abundance of power relative to other states that counterbalancing is prohibitively costly (Brooks and Wohlforth 2008). In addition to the preponderance of power argument is the liberal claim that the United States is a benign hegemon and that as a result of a number of institutional constraints, other states do not find American power to be threatening (Ikenberry 2011). According to these two perspectives, states are not actively seeking to counterbalance the United States.

Other scholars argue that as a result of both unprecedented American power and the USA's aggressive unilateral foreign policy under President George W. Bush, states are beginning to counterbalance against the United States. The best evidence of this might not be traditional 'hard balancing' in the form of countervailing alliances, but might rather take the form of 'soft balancing', which Robert Pape defines as 'nonmilitary tools to delay, frustrate, and undermine aggressive unilateral US military policies' (2005: 10). Some interpret the refusal of the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council to pass a resolution authorizing the use of force against Iraq as an example of soft balancing. This action did not prevent the United States from invading Iraq, but it did complicate the mission and certainly increased the costs of the war. And while states such as China, France, and Russia have so far adopted only institutional and diplomatic strategies to constrain US power, proponents of soft balancing do not rule out the possibility of states turning to hard balancing—especially if the United States unilaterally takes military action against additional states.

While defensive realism predicts that the foreign policy behaviour of the United States should be one of restraint, especially since America, partly owing to geography, enjoys a high degree of security, one could argue that the history of American foreign policy belies this prediction. Writers such as Noam Chomsky (2004) have argued that the United States has pursued a policy of hegemony and has frequently sought opportunities to increase its power relative to other states. As a fall-back position, defensive realists posit that a variety of domestic pathologies can prevent a state from conforming to the imperatives of the international system.[2] Thus when the United States or any other state over-expands or pursues empire, defensive realists argue that the cause of this behaviour is rooted at the domestic level.

Offensive realism

Offensive realists like John Mearsheimer reach a different conclusion about the effect that the distribution of power has on the foreign policy behaviour of states. Rather than security maximizers, offensive realists argue that states are power maximizers, meaning that they are continually searching for opportunities to gain more power relative to other states. Unlike defensive realists, offensive realists do not believe that security in the international system is plentiful. They also do not believe that balancing behaviour is as frequent and efficient as defensive realists contend. According to Mearsheimer, the anarchical international system and the uncertainty that exists about the current and future intentions of other states such as China compel the United States to maximize its relative power position. For Mearsheimer, the logic of offensive realism leads states to 'understand that the best way to ensure their survival is to be the most powerful state in the system' (2001: 33). Global hegemony, according to offensive realism, is the highest goal of every state's foreign policy. Unfortunately, however, Mearsheimer argues that it is impossible because of the 'stopping power of water', which makes it impracticable for any state to project its power over vast distances and to conquer and hold distant territory. While global hegemony is impossible, regional hegemony is not, and Mearsheimer argues that the United States is the only state in history to achieve this esteemed position. In light of the nineteenth-century history of American

foreign policy as it expanded across North America and acquired a number of offshore territories in the wake of the Spanish–American War (1898), Mearsheimer concludes that the United States is 'well-suited to be the poster child for offensive realism' (Mearsheimer 2001: 238). Once America achieved regional hegemony in the western hemisphere, offensive realism predicts that its main foreign policy goal would be to prevent the emergence of a hegemon in other regions of the world. According to this theory, the United States has actively sought to prevent the emergence of a hegemon in either Europe or Asia. Offensive realists favour an 'offshore balancing' grand strategy and, according to Mearsheimer, this is largely the strategy that the United States has followed since the end of the Second World War. While many realists endorse an offshore balancing grand strategy, it is certainly debatable whether this is the strategy that the United States has followed. For realists and non-realists alike, it is not self-evident that water has prevented the United States from achieving the position of global hegemon (Layne 2006).

Internal, domestic theories

Theories that accentuate domestic factors are sceptical of the ability of systemic theories to explain American foreign policy. These theories follow the tradition of *Innenpolitik* and emphasize the influence of internal, domestic factors on foreign policy. Rather than an outside–in explanation, these theories reverse the chain of causation to an inside–out explanation. Pressures from within a state determine the character of its foreign policy. Elections, public opinion polls, the condition of the domestic economy, and the degree of national unity are all factors that foreign policy officials, and especially the president, must take into account when pursuing foreign policy objectives. Rather than the international system determining the foreign policy of the United States, the political and economic structure of the American polity is argued to be of fundamental importance to explaining America's external behaviour.

Liberalism

Liberalism is one of the most prominent domestic theories of American foreign policy. This should not be surprising because the United States is a quintessential liberal state (Hartz 1991). The logic of liberalism dictates that America's foreign policy should replicate the liberal democratic character of the American polity. According to liberalism, one of the core objectives of American foreign policy is to promote the expansion of individual liberty across the globe. This is argued to be beneficial both to the United States, in that its own security is enhanced by the presence of a large number of like-minded liberal states, and to the rest of the world as liberalism is a political ideology that champions the rights and liberties of all individuals. While liberals agree that American foreign policy should be a manifestation of its domestic political values, there is disagreement on the best way to promote liberal democracy.

For many, liberalism is most closely associated with the foreign policy of President Woodrow Wilson (whose presidency ran from 1913 to 1921). Indeed the association is so close that liberalism and Wilsonianism are almost interchangeable terms. On the eve of the United States' belated decision to enter the First World War, Wilson articulated a new vision of the world, and America's role in it, that was informed by ideas that constitute the essence of a liberal theory of foreign policy. Most fundamentally, Wilson rejected the so-called timeless principles of realism by arguing that common interests needed to replace the focus on national interests and called for a collective security system to replace the flawed balance-of-power system. More specifically, Wilson advocated democratic forms of government, free trade, the creation of international institutions to help maintain the peace, and the self-determination of peoples. In order to realize these ideals, liberals from Wilson to the present have argued that the United States must take the lead in actively promoting them. This is frequently referred to as liberal internationalism, whereby the United States, as a liberal democracy, must take on the role of world leadership and actively construct a peaceful liberal order through multilateral cooperation and effective international organizations.

Today, democracy promotion is one of the main elements of a liberal theory of American foreign policy. Not only does democracy promote the advancement of liberty, but it has been proven that democratic states do not fight other democratic states. Liberals, therefore, argue that it is in the national interest of the United States to promote the spread of democracy. The notion that democratic states do not wage wars with other democracies is what proponents term the

democratic peace.[3] If one accepts the empirical finding that democracies do not fight one another, then the issue becomes the best way to encourage democratization so as to enlarge the club of democratic states. Different presidential administrations have been torn between, on the one hand, indirectly promoting democracy through leading by example, foreign aid to support pro-democracy movements, diplomatic encouragement, and, on the other hand, directly promoting democracy by using military force to remove dictators and bring about regime change. Democracy promotion was one of the rationales put forth by the George W. Bush administration to justify the 2003 invasion of Iraq. A democratic Iraq, it was argued, would remove the alleged threat Saddam Hussein posed to the United States and help jump-start democratic transitions throughout the Middle East. This is one of the reasons why many liberals supported the Iraq War while realists, who are not only suspicious of the so-called democratic peace but also critical of crusading foreign policies to remake the world in America's image, were generally opposed to the war.

The promotion of free trade and the belief that international institutions help to facilitate international cooperation are two of the other main pillars of a liberal theory of American foreign policy. For a liberal thinker such as G. John Ikenberry, each one of the elements—democracy, free trade, and international institutions—are mutually reinforcing and simultaneously help to advance American interests and contribute to a pacific world order (Ikenberry 2000). Thus liberals are strong supporters of free-trade agreements such as NAFTA, as well as membership in international institutions such as the United Nations and the World Trade Organization. We will return to the three pillars of liberal internationalism in the section on American grand strategy later in the chapter.

Marxism

Marxist theories are another example of an inside–out explanation in that they emphasize the economic determinants of American foreign policy. Rather than accentuating the structure of the domestic political system, Marxism underlines the capitalist economy of the United States and the pressures that it exerts on an expansionistic and imperialistic foreign policy. By one account, the foreign policy of the United States simply serves the interests of the capitalist class and the large corporations that they own. Proponents of this theory argue that most of the interventions, covert or otherwise, that the United States has carried out in Latin America, the Caribbean, the Middle East, and elsewhere all stem from the needs of the American economy for markets and cheap sources of raw materials, for example oil (Kolko 1969). Marxist theories interpret the history of American foreign policy as one of imperialism and empire building, and locate the source of this behaviour in the capitalist economic system of the United States (Chomsky 2004). The American economy, like that of other capitalist economies, is prone to crises—unemployment, over-production, downturns—and Marxists argue that elites attempt to solve them by searching for new sources of capital, raw materials, and markets abroad. In order to satisfy the interests of the capitalist class, Marxists argue that American foreign policy promotes their interests by providing a stable international environment for the expansion of capitalism. Marxists argue that the military power of the United States and the wars that it has fought in such places as Vietnam, Bosnia, and Iraq are meant to provide the international stability that capitalists require in order to invest in foreign lands and accrue greater rates of profit.

Similar to a Marxist analyst, the Open Door school of American diplomacy holds that the mainspring of United States foreign policy has been the search for markets and the desire to integrate the entire world into an open, free-trade economic system. The most famous proponent of the Open Door interpretation of American foreign policy was William Appleman Williams in his classic book *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1972). According to Williams, the United States has attempted to solve its domestic economic problems by expanding abroad in search of overseas markets, cheap raw materials, and investment opportunities. Expansion was deemed to be the answer to America's domestic woes and Williams argues that the foreign policy of the United States is determined by domestic factors. For policy makers who embraced the Open Door outlook on the world, America's prosperity at home depended on access to markets abroad. For Williams, the result of the United States pursuit of an Open Door foreign policy was the creation of an American empire. These views became the bedrock of the revisionist interpretation of the Cold War, which held that America's Open Door economic interests, and not Soviet expansionism, were largely responsible for US intervention in the third world.

Toward a synthesis: neoclassical realism

We would be amiss if we did not mention attempts to combine systemic and domestic factors into a comprehensive theory of foreign policy. A recent example of this undertaking is the theory of neoclassical realism. According to neoclassical realism the only way to explain the foreign policy of the United States is to consider the manner in which systemic and domestic factors interact with one another. Systemic factors, especially the relative amount of power that a state has, are important for establishing the broad parameters of foreign policy; they help to establish what is and what is not possible. Yet the distribution of power alone cannot, according to neoclassical realism, explain the particular foreign policy behaviour of the United States. Neoclassical realists argue that domestic factors are needed to explain how systemic factors are actually translated into specific foreign policy decisions. Stephen Walt explains that the causal logic of neoclassical realism 'places domestic politics as an intervening variable between the distribution of power and foreign policy behavior' (Walt 2002: 211). Two important intervening variables that neoclassical realism highlights are decision makers' perceptions of the distribution of power and domestic state structure. In other words, for neoclassical realists, both individual decision makers and domestic politics, including the governmental structure, matter in understanding the foreign policy of the United States.

Neoclassical realists have offered their own unique perspective on the balance-of-power mechanism. Rather than states balancing power, scholars such as Walt argue that states actually balance against threats. According to Walt 'it is more accurate to say that states tend to ally with or against the foreign power that poses the greatest threat' (Walt 1987: 21). Balance-of-threat theory allows analysts to entertain a host of additional factors—geography, perceptions of leaders, and intentions—to account for when and why balancing actually takes place. It also means that how a state conducts its foreign policy has implications on whether other states perceive it as threatening or not.

Constructivism

Whereas the previous theories all tended to emphasize material factors to explain American foreign policy, constructivists accentuate the role of ideas and identity that they argue play a major role in foreign policy. Constructivists treat identities and interests as malleable social constructions and are interested in the social processes that lead foreign policy officials to regard America as an 'exceptional' state or a 'virtuous city on the hill'. National identity, according to constructivism, should be the starting point of foreign policy analysis. The identity of the United States is, in part, a function of both its domestic self-image and its foreign policy. Constructivist scholars note that identity is never self-referential, but rather is always relational and emerges by differentiating oneself from others. Thus the identity of the United States during the Cold War as the defender of liberal democracy and freedom was, in part, derived by juxtaposing itself to the evil and totalitarian Soviet Union. Constructivists can point to the role of ideas in fostering these identities in documents such as NSC-68 (see Chapter 6 and Key quotes 6.3), which outlined the United States' Cold War policy of containment and sharply differentiated the national identities of the United States and the Soviet Union. Some argue that it was the changed identity of the Soviet Union under Mikhail Gorbachev's 'new thinking' that eventually led to the peaceful conclusion of the Cold War.

One of the reasons why constructivist approaches to the study of American foreign policy consider identity to be so important is because contructivists argue it is the basis of interests that greatly affect the formulation of foreign policy. Contrary to theories such as realism, which consider interests to be a function of material capabilities, constructivists argue that they are largely a function of ideas. The ideas that American foreign policy officials hold about the United States form the basis of the American national interest. From a constructivist point of view, one way to understand the United States' global war on terror is in terms of the identity of America as the global guardian of liberty and freedom. And this interest of defending liberty and freedom in order to preserve the identity of America obviously has important implications for the conduct of foreign policy. Yet American foreign policy is always susceptible to change because identities and interests are malleable. According to constructivists, the interests of the United States are derived endogenously through the process of social interaction. This helps to explain why the United States behaves one way when interacting with other liberal democracies and another way when interacting with non-democracies. By emphasizing ideas, norms, and the social construction of identity, constructivists have a keen interest in explaining the sources of change in American foreign policy (Dueck 2006).

KEY POINTS

- Systemic theories such as defensive and offensive realism argue that the most important influence on America's foreign policy is the international system and the relative amount of power that the United States possesses.
- Defensive and offensive realism disagree about the manner in which the international system influences the conduct of American foreign policy.
- Theories that follow the tradition of *Innenpolitik* stress the influence of domestic factors on foreign policy.
- Liberalism and Marxism are two examples of theories that accentuate internal factors to explain American foreign policy.
- Neoclassical realism is a theory of American foreign policy that seeks to combine systemic and domestic factors.
- Constructivism emphasizes the role of ideas and identity in American foreign policy.

The origins of the Cold War

The theoretical controversy over whether American foreign policy should be understood as shaped primarily by the external or internal environment has impacted the debate on the origins of the Cold War. A number of different answers have been given to the question of who was responsible for the Cold War. This period of American foreign policy (1945–89) has been a subject of intense interest for political scientists and diplomatic historians. The conventional wisdom is that American foreign policy underwent a tremendous transformation between the time the United States entered the Second World War in 1941, following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and when the United States and the allies emerged victorious over Germany and Japan. This is often described as a change from isolationism to globalism, in which the United States used its preponderant power to assert itself on the world stage. Yet throughout the post–Second World War period, American power was challenged by the Soviet Union, which resulted in a tense Cold War that was most dramatically illustrated by the nuclear weapons arms race between the two countries. A key question shaping the historiography of the Cold War is: what led the United States and the Soviet Union to go from allies during the Second World War to bitter rivals locked in a global struggle for power from 1945 to 1989?

External explanations

From a purely systemic viewpoint, neither the United States nor the Soviet Union is to blame for the Cold War. The Second World War created a vacuum of power in Europe that was filled by the only two great powers that remained standing: the United States and the Soviet Union. According to this view, the ensuing rivalry and competition between the United States and the Soviet Union can be simply explained in terms of the bipolar distribution of power that existed after 1945. One problem with this account is that there is no agency; there are no villains in which to assess blame and responsibility for the origins of the conflict.

An external, realist explanation of the Cold War holds that in addition to a bipolar distribution of power after 1945, one of the two poles, the Soviet Union, was an expansionist power that was bent on world domination. According to this view, United States foreign policy throughout the Cold War was a successful response to the threatening and expansionist behaviour of the Kremlin. Within diplomatic history, this is referred to as the orthodox account of the origins of the Cold War and, not surprisingly, is popular with many American historians. The orthodox explanation places the blame for the Cold War squarely on the shoulders of the Soviet Union and its leader Joseph Stalin. The United States, in documents such as the famous NSC-68, interpreted Soviet intentions as inherently aggressive and a direct threat to American national security. Given this interpretation of Soviet intentions, the United States had no choice but to respond to this threat and actively check the power of the Soviet Union. This formed the basis of the American policy of containment that is often credited to George Kennan, who was a prominent diplomat stationed in Moscow. On the basis of Kennan's understanding of the Soviet's ideology, he argued 'it is clear that the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies' (Kennan 1984: 119).

Internal explanations

As the Cold War dragged on, a new set of historians arose who challenged the notion that American foreign policy was simply a response to the alleged threat posed by the Soviet Union. Instead of assigning responsibility for America's behaviour throughout the Cold War either to the bipolar distribution of power or to the expansionistic

ideology of the Soviet empire, the revisionist school of historians looked inside the United States. And when they closely examined the domestic interests of the United States, the revisionists argued that since the late 1800s the overriding goal of American foreign policy was to promote the spread of capitalism so as to ensure a world of free markets that would provide access to American goods and services. This economic thesis was most eloquently put forth by William Appleman Williams (1972), who argued that the promotion of an Open Door world, whereby other states embraced America's liberal ideology and opened their markets to US economic expansion, was a constant pattern of behaviour in American foreign policy. Thus for the revisionists, especially those writing during and after the Vietnam War, the United States' expansionistic and even imperialist behaviour was responsible for the onset of the Cold War. The only threat that the Soviet Union posed after the Second World War was that it openly challenged America's vision of an open, liberal economic world run and managed by the United States. Here Williams went beyond a Marxist analysis, as he also underlined the liberal ideological dimension of US foreign policy whereby American policy makers believed that domestic prosperity and tranquility at home depended on continuous expansion overseas. Constructivists would construe this as an issue of identity. The very identity of the United States as a liberal state standing for liberty and justice was juxtaposed to the totalitarianism and tyranny of the Soviet Union. Each of the two protagonists viewed themselves and their actions as virtuous and the other as less than virtuous. These mutually conflicting identities, for constructivists, prolonged the Cold War until there was a change in the core identity of the Soviet Union.

Neoclassical explanations

A neoclassical explanation holds that both external and internal factors are necessary to understand the origins of the Cold War. The starting point for a neoclassical explanation is the distribution of power that existed in the international system after the Second World War. Here neoclassical realists such as Chris Layne concur that in 1945 the United States held a significant power advantage over all the other states in the international system. This favourable distribution of power provided the opportunity for the United States to expand its interests around the globe. But for Layne (2006), it is domestic factors, namely Open Door economic and ideological imperatives, which explain why the United States chose to expand its interests and deliberately pursue a Cold War with the Soviet Union from 1945 to 1989. Layne puts forth an extra-regional hegemony theory to argue that even if the Soviet Union had not existed after the Second World War, 'America's Open Door aims on the Continent would have led to the establishment of US hegemony in Western Europe' (Layne 2006: 70).

KEY POINTS

- Different answers have been given to the question of who was responsible for the Cold War.
- External explanations emphasize the bipolar distribution of power that existed after the Second World War and argue that the Soviet Union was inherently expansionistic and the United States attempted to contain the spread of communism.
- Internal explanations argue that the United States' economic expansionistic and even imperialist behaviour was responsible for the onset of the Cold War.
- Constructivist explanations emphasize the mutually exclusive identities of the United States and the Soviet Union.
- Neoclassical explanations argue that the United States' favourable position in the international system coupled with the domestic imperatives of the Open Door explain why it pursued a Cold War with the Soviet Union.

Grand strategy

Grand strategy is defined as the overall vision of a state's national security goals and a determination of the most appropriate means to achieve these goals. Competing grand strategies provide different views about the character of international politics and the role that the United States must play in order to achieve its core national security interests. Thus there is a very close connection between theory and grand strategy. Hal Brands defines grand strategy as the 'conceptual framework that helps nations determine where they want to go and how to get there; it is the theory, or logic, that guides leaders seeking security in a complex and insecure world' (Brands 2014: 3). Since the end of the Cold War, there have been a number of debates about US grand strategy, but perhaps most fundamental has been the debate about which grand strategy the United States should follow. The aim of this section is to provide an overview of three different grand strategies—primacy, liberal internationalism, and offshore balancing—and to underline the theory of American foreign policy that informs each of these competing strategies.

Primacy

A grand strategy of primacy seeks to preserve America's position as the undisputed preeminent power in the international system. Peace among the great powers and American national security are held to rest on a preponderance of US power. Following the end of the Cold War, the United States has occupied the unique position of being the sole superpower in the international system. Proponents of primacy view this as an extremely advantageous position and argue that America's grand strategy should be one of preventing any future great power from challenging the unipolar position of the United States. This view is based on the realist premise of peace through strength. Accordingly, the United States should militarily outspend other states to preserve its military dominance, continue to station troops in, and underwrite the security of, countries such as Germany and Japan, and actively work to prevent the rise of states such as China that could pose a challenge to American primacy.

In order to preserve American primacy, the United States not only needs to be more powerful than anyone else, but it must also exercise leadership. While recognizing that multilateralism has certain advantages, proponents of primacy argue that unipolar powers have the benefit of being able to act unilaterally to advance their own interests. When the situation warrants, such as when dealing with rogue states armed with weapons of mass destruction, advocates of primacy do not hesitate to recommend that the United States act alone. Institutions such as the United Nations are regarded with a degree of suspicion as they are largely viewed as restraining rather than enabling American power. Finally, proponents of primacy do not believe that the promotion of democracy should trump other vital US interests. Primacy is largely informed by a power-maximizing version of structural realism that does not give much weight to the character of domestic regimes. Thus if the promotion of democracy in a country such as Iraq erodes US power relative to other great powers such as China, proponents of primacy would conclude that this is antithetical to American national interests. Yet some proponents of US primacy, such as the neo-conservatives in the Bush administration, argue that democracy promotion is a vital component of American grand strategy.[4] All advocates of US primacy, however, agree that keeping America in its preeminent position and the rest of the world off balance is a core national interest.

The Bush Doctrine embodied important elements of a strategy of preserving America's dominant position in the international system (see Major debates and their impact 2.1). The Bush Doctrine explicitly embraced America's commitment to preserving its unipolar position. The 2002 *National Security Strategy* (Bush 2002) declares that the US military will be 'strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equaling, the power of the United States'. The Bush Doctrine also declares America's willingness to act unilaterally, which is most evident in its controversial policy of pre-emptive and even preventive war. The Bush administration's unsympathetic view of international institutions was revealed by its decision to invade Iraq without the authorization of the United Nations Security Council. Critics contend that the strategy of primacy is ultimately self-defeating as the US inevitably succumbs to the imperial temptation of overextending itself by fighting unnecessary wars and as other states actively seek to counterbalance American power (see Controversies 2.1).

MAJOR DEBATES AND THEIR IMPACT 2.1: BUSH DOCTRINE—REALIST OR LIBERAL?

There has been a great deal of debate and controversy regarding the Bush Doctrine. One debate centres on whether the doctrine was based more on the principles of realism or liberalism. For many, it seems self-evident that the doctrine was based on a muscular version of realism. The call to preserve American primacy, the willingness to use force against enemies who challenge US power and interests, and the enthusiasm to pursue a go-it-alone strategy in order to secure American interests in a hostile world seems to fit comfortably in a realist world view. Yet many realists are critical of the Bush Doctrine, especially with respect to how it justified the Iraq War. Realists point to a fourth component of the Bush Doctrine: democracy promotion. A key rationale for the invasion of Iraq was that regime change was necessary in order to install a democratic government in Iraq. Liberals who supported the war argued that democracy in Iraq would help to spread freedom and liberty throughout the Middle East, which would be beneficial to the US since democratic states do not fight democratic states. Thus rather than being based on the principles of realism, some argue that the Bush Doctrine was grounded on liberal Wilsonianism or what John Mearsheimer describes as 'Wilsonianism with teeth'.

Liberal internationalism

Many associate a liberal internationalist grand strategy with President Clinton, as evidenced by his *National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (Clinton 1995). Proponents of liberal internationalism agree that it is in the United States' interest to preserve its preeminent position in the world, but disagree with the policies that the Bush administration pursued to keep America number one. The Bush Doctrine, with its call for unilateral pre-emptive war, distain for multilateralism, and disregard for reigning rules and norms, is seen by many liberals as a bold new grand strategy that is destined to fail (see Major debates and their impact 2.1). President Obama did much to shift American grand strategy away from the Bush Doctrine and toward liberal internationalism. Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, the United States, as a liberal hegemon, played a vital role in maintaining international order that directly benefited both the United States and much of the rest of the world. Ikenberry (2002) argues that in addition to the realist-based containment order that existed after the Second World War, the United States also established a liberal democratic order that was based on economic openness, international institutions such as the United Nations and the Bretton Woods system, and democracy. While the United States played a key role in the creation of these multilateral institutions, the argument is that they continue to serve American interests by providing legitimacy and a rule-based setting for its foreign policy behaviour. Liberals such as Ikenberry argue that before the Bush administration, most states did not fear US power because of its institutionalized, legalized, and democratic character. Liberals conclude that it makes strategic sense for the US to continue to adhere to the institutions and rules that it helped to build after the Second World War.

It should be self-evident that a liberal internationalist grand strategy is firmly anchored to the theory of liberalism. Most fundamentally, the strategy calls on America to promote the spread of democracy and liberty around the world. This is viewed as both a moral duty and a strategy that actually improves American security. The United States is better able to pursue its interests and reduce security threats when other states are also democracies. Rather than promoting democracy through regime change, as the neo-conservatives in the Bush administration advocated, the Obama administration took a more pragmatic and cautious approach, while Trump has seemingly maintained US security commitments but taken a much colder view to the multilateral liberal economic regimes that the US has been so instrumental in creating. Closely related to the argument about the pacifying effect of democracy is the liberal idea that the promotion of free trade increases the prosperity of more and more people, which, in turn, creates the conditions for democratic governance. Free trade is believed to foster greater interdependence among states, which diminishes the economic gains that any state could expect to incur by going to war. Liberals champion greater economic interdependence between the United States and China because they believe it lessens the chance of conflict. Finally, the creation of international institutions and norms are viewed as the best mechanisms for managing the array of political, economic, and environmental problems that arise in an interdependent world. In this manner the three key ideas of liberal theory—democracy, interdependence, and institutions—are vital elements of a liberal internationalist grand strategy.

Offshore balancing

Apart from a few proponents of neo-isolationism, those advocating an offshore balancing grand strategy are the only ones who question both the wisdom and the viability of preserving America's preeminent position in the international system. Rather than trying to preserve the impossible, namely unipolarity, many realists advocate a policy of offshore balancing that attempts to maintain America's relative power and protect its national interests in an emerging multipolar world. An offshore balancing grand strategy is firmly rooted in a realist balance of power theory. According to this theory, any state that attempts to make a bid for hegemony will be opposed by a coalition of other states that will seek to restore a rough balance of power. Moreover, as evidenced by the actions of the United States since the end of the Cold War, states that possess a preponderance of power are prone to misuse it.

By embracing multipolarity, proponents of offshore balancing argue that the United States will accrue a number of important geostrategic benefits. First, by giving up the quest to dominate the entire international system, the United States can actually preserve, if not augment, its relative power position

in the international system. This can be achieved by requiring other countries, such as Germany, South Korea, and Japan, rather than the United States, to provide for their own security. Second, it allows the United States to distance itself from the power struggles in Europe and Asia, and focus on its own domestic and international interests. Third, offshore balancing circumscribes America's national interests and limits its involvement to areas of the globe that are of vital strategic importance. Fourth, offshore balancing augments American national security by allowing it to take advantage of its insular geographical position in the western hemisphere and heed the advice of George Washington to steer clear of permanent alliances. Proponents of offshore balancing, for example, argue that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has outlived its usefulness and recommend that it be dissolved. Finally, by eschewing primacy, the United States would be able to put the brakes on the liberal-world-order-building project, which has entailed fighting unnecessary wars in the hope of promoting democracy and preserving the American empire.

Given the serious budget deficit and financial problems that America currently faces, it is uncertain whether the US can any longer afford the ambitious and expensive grand strategy it has been following for over half a century. Proponents of offshore balancing also question whether primacy has in fact made America more secure. Rather than seeing the pursuit of overwhelming power as the appropriate strategy for achieving American security, Benjamin Schwartz and Chris Layne consider the ironic possibility 'that the very preponderance of American power may now make us not more secure but less secure' (2002: 36). With respect to the threat of terrorism, an offshore balancing strategy recommends that the United States exercise restraint, reduce its overseas military presence, and refrain from meddling in the affairs of other states.

KEY POINTS

- Debates about grand strategy are explicitly related to different theories of American foreign policy.
- The grand strategy of primacy argues that the overriding goal of US strategy should be to preserve indefinitely America's position as the undisputed preeminent power in the international system.
- Liberal internationalism advocates continued American leadership of the world through multilateral institutions and the promotion of democracy and free trade.
- Offshore balancing is a grand strategy for a multipolar world and argues that the US must exercise greater restraint and shift some of its security burdens onto other states.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to demonstrate that the study of American foreign policy is dependent on theory. At the same time, there are a variety of different theories that attempt to explain American foreign policy. Some theories accentuate the impact that external, systemic factors have on American foreign policy while others highlight the influence of internal, domestic factors. And there are also those that attempt to combine systemic and domestic factors. Some theories emphasize material factors, while others stress ideational and identity factors. Theories of American foreign policy are important for understanding the debate on the origins of the Cold War as well as for the debate on the future of American grand strategy. While complex, theory is unavoidable when it comes to the task of attempting to explain American foreign policy.

QUESTIONS

1. Which of the five sources of American foreign policy identified by James Rosenau do you believe is the most important for understanding the external behaviour of the United States?
2. How would you explain the United States' decision to invade Iraq in light of each of the five sources of American foreign policy outlined by Rosenau?
3. Do you agree or disagree that it is impossible to construct a theory of American foreign policy?
4. What are the main sources of disagreement between offensive and defensive realists?

5. Compare and contrast 'inside–out' with 'outside–in' explanations of American foreign policy.
6. Whose interpretation of the origins of the Cold War do you believe is most persuasive?
7. Is Chris Layne's explanation of the Cold War able to bridge the divide between internal and external accounts of the Cold War?
8. Which of the three grand strategies do you believe the US should be following today?
9. Do you agree or disagree that states are attempting to counterbalance the US?
10. Which theory do you believe the Bush Doctrine was based on?

FURTHER READING

For a general survey of the main theories in the field

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ENDNOTES

1. For a discussion of the offence–defence balance, see Jervis (1978) and Lynn-Jones (1995).
2. Snyder (1991) and domestic pathologies.
3. On the theory that democratic states do not fight wars against other democratic states, see Russett (1993). For a criticism of this theory, see Layne (1994)
4. For an informative discussion of neo-conservativism and American foreign policy, see Schmidt and Williams (2008).

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3

American exceptionalism

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Introduction: American difference and exceptionality

Since its founding almost a quarter of a millennium ago, the United States of America has thought of itself as, and been widely perceived to be, exceptional. The United States is unlike other nation states in myriad ways. Most obviously, the United States is different from other states and nations because it is by far the most successful great power in late modern times. This success is manifest in its current unprecedented status as the world's sole superpower. It is the seat of the world's largest economy. And it is the ideological leader of the most powerful, appealing, and successful form of political, economic, and social organization in modern times: liberal capitalist democracy. Because of its extraordinary success as a great power, the United States has the capabilities to shape the world in a variety of ways that reflect its preference for how the world should be ordered, a preference rooted ideologically in its conception of itself and its special mission. Extraordinary success also has greatly magnified the effect of every aspect of America on the world, from the sublime to the shameful. This success and influence makes an understanding of the United States and its agenda vital for the understanding of major features of contemporary world politics. Understanding how America is different and how it is exceptional is, for better or worse, essential for understanding not just US foreign policy, but major aspects of contemporary world politics.

Success makes the United States different and influential in far-reaching ways, but the core reason the United States is widely viewed as exceptional is because of its intensely liberal character.

America is exceptional, both in fact and perception, because more than any other state in history it has embodied and advanced an ideological vision of a way of life centred upon freedom, in politics, in economics, and in society. Prior to the last half of the twentieth century, what were then called republics were very rare in world politics, and the founding and expansion of the US marked a decisive turning point in the long and largely tragic story of free and democratic government (see Key quotes 3.1). Convinced they embodied, in the words of President Abraham Lincoln, 'the last best hope of mankind', Americans have been audacious, at times reckless, innovators in turning the abstract and lofty Enlightenment goal of a fully free society into a practical working arrangement. This project has been marred by contradictions, seedy opportunism, and startling blunders. But over nearly twenty-five decades it has relentlessly progressed and come far closer to realization than even the founders dared to imagine. From the outset, this anomalous and experimental polity saw itself not just as liberalism in one country but as the model, the vanguard, and at times the vital facilitator of a universally appealing and universally realizable way of life. This vision of an eventual liberal republican end of history, as the German philosopher Immanuel Kant called it, has been deeply attractive, even intoxicating, to many, while being a frightening threat and a writ for upheaval and imperialism to others.

Given its influence in the world and its highly developed sense of itself as the embodiment of a universal and revolutionary ideology, the claim that the United States is exceptional is highly charged with contentious ideological connotations (see Major debates and their impact 3.1). In contemporary American and world politics, the expression 'American exceptionalism' means very different things to different people. For some it is a vision, for others a sham, and for others a nightmare. For some Americans, particularly recent neo-conservatives, intoxicated with power and righteousness, American exceptionalism is a green light, a legitimizing rationale, and an all-purpose excuse for ignoring international law and world public opinion, for invading other countries and imposing governments, and for routinely identifying particular and often provincial and pedestrian American interests with the universal pursuit of progress and freedom. For others, American exceptionalism is code for the liberal internationalist aspiration for a world made free and peaceful not through the assertion of unchecked American power and influence, but rather through the erection of a system of international law and organization that protects domestic liberty by moderating international anarchy. This vision sees all states, and particularly large and powerful states, as inherently dangerous and seeks checks, both domestic

KEY QUOTES 3.1: THE ORIGINS OF AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM

The United States, almost from its start, has had an expanding economic system. The nineteenth-century American economy, as compared to European ones, was characterized by more market freedom, more individual landownership, and a higher wage income structure—all sustained by the national classical liberal ideology. From the Revolution on, it was a laissez-faire country par excellence.

(*Lipset 1996: 54*)

Hence there was a strong family likeness between all the English colonies as they came to birth. All, from the beginning, seemed destined to let freedom grow, not the aristocratic freedom of their motherland, but a middle-class and democratic freedom of which the world's history had not previously provided a complete example.

(*Tocqueville 1988: 34*)

The English colonies—and that was one of the main reasons for their prosperity—have always enjoyed more internal freedom and political independence than those of other nations; nowhere was this principle of liberty applied more completely than in the states of New England.

(*Tocqueville 1988: 39*)

I have already said enough to put Anglo-American civilization in its true light. It is the product (and one should continually bear in mind this point of departure) of two perfectly distinct elements which elsewhere have often been at war with one another but which in America it was somehow possible to incorporate in to each other, forming a marvelous combination. I mean the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom.

(*Tocqueville 1988: 47*)

There is therefore at the bottom of democratic institutions some hidden tendency which often makes men promote the general prosperity, in spite of their vices and their mistakes, whereas in the aristocratic institutions there is sometimes a secret bias which, in spite of talents and virtues, leads men to contribute to the afflictions of their fellows. In this way it may come about that under aristocratic governments public men do evil without intending it, and in democracies they bring about good results of which they have never thought.

(*Tocqueville 1988: 235*)

and international, to restrain the worst impulses of all nations, including the United States. For liberals and internationalists American exceptionalism provides a standard against which much of American history is found wanting in various ways. It is a reminder that much remains to be done and is a perpetual call to action to bring American practices ever closer to American ideals.

Difference, exceptionality, and success

Exceptionality and the hard test of realism

The indispensable baseline for assessing the effects of any domestic factors, such as American liberal republicanism and the exceptionalist ideology associated with it, is the simple realist model of security, power, and interests. In this view, states above all seek security, and they need and seek power to achieve security. They in turn use their power to realize various interests, particularly economic interests, which in turn enhances their power and thus their security. This baseline realist model poses the vital first question: what in actual American behaviour *cannot be explained* by the pursuit of security, power, and interest? Only if this simple model fails to explain do we even need to consider the possible influences of other factors, among them ideology, on American behaviour. However, applying this simple model to any state, particularly a large and powerful state, is rarely a straightforward task. What security requires, what the contours of power look like, and what content interests actually have are often ambiguous and fraught with misperception and debate, not only by actors in the heat of actual political decision making, but also among scholars making after-the-fact evaluations. Furthermore, as constructivist theorists remind us, identity, ideas, and ideology shape what are understood as threats and interests, and also powerfully shape, in both positive and negative ways, the capacity of states to mobilize power for the pursuit of security, power, and interest.

Applied to the United States, the simple realist model has considerable explanatory power, but also important blindnesses and limitations. Well articulated through American history in varying degrees of clarity, and richly developed in recent decades by international theorists, the realist view is that the United States is not in any significant way fundamentally different from other states. This conclusion provides the basis for the routine dismissal of the entire discourse of American exceptionality. Realists hold that all the main steps in the trajectory of American foreign policy such as relentless continental expansion against weak adversaries, regional hegemony in the New World often exploited for economic gains, global great power balancing and alliance leadership against predatory revisionist states, and then Western and global hegemony are essentially what any state (seeking security, power, and interest) would have done if it were in the thoroughly enviable position of the United States in the international system.

The realist view of the United States does, however, clearly recognize that the liberal republican character of the United States has two significant distinguishing manifestations: early isolationism and later internationalism. For realists, liberalism has indeed mattered for US foreign policy, but in largely negative ways. From the realist perspective, the early American posture of isolationism was made possible by the relative isolation of the United States from the great powers of Europe. But as the industrial revolution unfolding in the twentieth century brought about the end of this isolation, the United States clung for too long to an isolationist foreign policy, with nearly disastrous consequences for the preservation of the balance of power in Europe. Forced to deal with the world, the United States sought to transform the world through the realization of its liberal internationalist programme for the promotion of democracy within states and of international law and organization between them. For realists, this agenda, particularly in its more urgent and crusading forms, entails an unrealistic and utopian hope for human improvement and political change, and is seen as a cloak for raw American power interests. Its pursuit is seen as a chronic source of mischief and disorder, and realists aspire for the United States to abandon its exceptionalist pretences and behave like a normal great power.

Yet the realists' critical and dismissive posture toward the liberal elements that sit at the core of American exceptionalism fails to do full justice to liberalism and its internationalism. The realists correctly see that the American liberal internationalist project has an agenda that is revolutionary to a Westphalian version of world order and to the types of states traditionally associated with this order. But they fail to appreciate the extent to which the extraordinary levels of peace,

prosperity, and freedom that prevail within the core of the American system of the Western liberal democratic states are in significant measure the realization of the American liberal internationalist project. Realists also fail to see that this internationalist agenda (which is increasingly best advanced by Europeans rather than Americans) holds the key to whatever hopes there are to address the myriad real and significant global problems that are being produced by rising levels of global interdependence.

The dark side of American exceptionalism

The landscape of argument about American exceptionalism is further complicated by the fact that the United States is not purely a combination of the very standard realist goals and behaviours and liberal elements, but is also shaped, like all other states, by idiosyncratic factors of national identity rooted in ethnicity, religion, and race. Here are factors that at times powerfully compromise and subvert the liberal democratic vision of the American Creed, and their net effect has been to add streaks of stark eccentricity and blatant hypocrisy to American pretensions to embody the overall liberal project of human freedom (Lieven 2004).

These non-liberal and anti-liberal aspects of American identity and behaviour are distinct from another contemporary view, widely held in Europe, of American exceptionalism as a marker for a cluster of retrograde and dangerous American tendencies. The pro-American liberal narrative of exceptionality emphasizes the historically progressive and internationally indispensable role of the United States as the standard-bearer of the liberal cause. But this has been and is being challenged, not just by the realists, but also by an older line of conservative anti-liberal European thinking and by a contemporary pro-liberal European position. The old European conservative line, echoed today in harsh terms by Islamicists, is that America's liberalism is a licence for popular anarchy and cultural levelling. For non-Western traditionalists, American liberty is a writ for the libertine, and the United States is the leading purveyor of 'westoxification' (Katzenstein and Keohane 2007).

Perhaps even more telling is the contemporary sceptical view of European liberal democrats, which has grown rapidly more widespread in reaction to the policies of the second Bush administration. At times, for such critics, it seems as if the United States has become something like the world's greatest and most dangerous rogue state. This new European view of exceptional America as liberal laggard emphasizes the ways in which more messianic and crusading aspects of the American liberal agenda, most manifest in contemporary American neo-conservativism, have linked up with some of the more parochial anti-liberal American religious and cultural tendencies to serve as the ideological façade for the exercise of a blatant and short-sighted pursuit of American power and interest. Given the vastness of American power, particularly military power, claims of American exceptionalism take on a frighteningly imperial character.

American success and its sources

The single most distinguishing feature of the United States has been its extraordinary success. This fact may not be universally liked, but it is universally recognized. Over the roughly two-and-a-half centuries since its founding, the United States of America has been by far the most successful state in the international system. This success is the indispensable basis for the vast influence the United States has had on the world and it has nourished the widespread sense among Americans of their special world role.

The United States was uniquely successful among the great powers over the last century, dubbed by the influential publisher Henry Luce 'the American Century'. The great powers of Europe, most notably Britain, Germany, and France, emerged from the First and Second World Wars either in ruins or ruinously sapped in strength, while the United States emerged largely unscathed. During the second half of the twentieth century, marked by the bipolar Cold War struggle between the Western capitalist democracies, led by the United States, and the socialist–communist coalition led by the Soviet Union, the United States and its allies also emerged victorious after the unexpected (and unexpectedly peaceful) Soviet collapse. Due to this outcome, the United States stands in a position of military ascendancy unprecedented in the modern European and global state systems. As the world's sole superpower, the USA spends more on its military than most of the rest of the world combined and holds something approaching worldwide military supremacy.

Success requires power and power is based, particularly in the industrial era, on wealth. The United States has been the world's largest economy for over a century. Even in the wake of rapid economic growth

in large previously less developed countries over the last several decades, the American economy is larger than the two next-largest countries combined. And the United States has sustained its economic leadership across recessions, depressions, and a dizzying succession of technological transformations.

America's economic liberalism—its robust capitalism—has also significantly contributed to American success. The strong commitment to individual achievement and obsession with economic accumulation is supportive of technological innovation and economic growth generally. These ideas are exemplified by the Horatio Alger myth: nobody's class position is fixed by birth, everyone has an equal opportunity for economic success (Hartz 1991: 62–3, 11–3, 219–24). From this perspective, a liberal society can win the allegiance of even the poorest members because of the promise of becoming rich. Regardless of whether the Alger myth is real, Americans believe it, and so do many people around the world. Economic opportunity and prosperity have been self-reinforcing. The lure of economic opportunity has been a major factor in the ability of the United States to attract skilled and hard-working immigrants.

In sum, the belief in American exceptionalism is based upon a number of core realities, including American military primacy, economic dynamism, and political diversity.

In order to further explore and assess the diverse conceptual landscape of what is at stake in the assertion of American exceptionalism, the remainder of this chapter is divided into four parts. The first part considers the meaning of exceptionalism, the critics of American exceptionalism, and the roots of American success. The second part examines the liberalism that makes the United States exceptional. The third part examines peculiar American identity formations of ethnicity, religion, and 'race', which interact with and often subvert the liberalism of America. Part four examines the role of American exceptionality across the five major epochs of American foreign policy, from the nation's founding to the present day.

Liberal exceptionalism

The free world project of American liberal republicanism

The fact that the United States has been so successful makes it different. But the fact that it has been so liberal is what makes it exceptional. A liberal republic, in the language of the Enlightenment, which originally conceptualized it, is a distinctly modern type of political regime, composed of a complex matrix of related elements, some of which are in perpetual tension with each other. A liberal republic, a polity that is liberal in the full and broad sense of the term, is animated and ordered by a set of values, institutions, and practices. The components of a modern liberal republic are individual freedom and institutionalized civil rights, popular sovereignty, limited government specified in a constitution, multiparty electoral democracy, private property and market capitalism, rule of law and independent courts, and religious liberty and separation of church and state. These ideas are codified in the founding documents of the republic: the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution, individual state constitutions, and the Bill of Rights. It is common to speak of the 'American Creed' as a distillation of liberal democratic values: 'liberty, egalitarianism, individualism, populism, and laissez-faire' (Lipset 1996: 19) or 'liberty, equality, democracy, individualism, human rights, the rule of law, and private property' (Huntington 2004: 46). Each of these elements is complex, and Americans, like citizens of other modern liberal democracies, are in perpetual ferment about their secondary features and the tensions among them. So important has liberal republicanism been to the United States and the United States to liberalism that it is impossible to understand the one without the other.

The American project of freedom did not, of course, spring fully formed out of the historically thin (if bracing) air of the New World. It was initially almost entirely an import of English institutions, practices, and values from the revolutions of the seventeenth century, which were then richly nourished by the moderate European Enlightenment in the eighteenth century. But unlike the long-established polities of Europe, where the traditional hierarchies of the crown and church held sway, and only slowly and reluctantly yielded to popular pressures over the last two centuries of reform, revolution, and war, the United States was born far more fully, and uncontestedly, liberal than any modern Europe state.

Anti-statism, state-building, and militarism

Anti-statism is deeply rooted in liberal thinking. The United States is different and exceptionally liberal

compared to other liberal democracies in the degree to which this anti-statism has been institutionalized and made the object of sustained popular pressure and shaped its foreign policy. Anti-statism and the fear of despotism led the American founders to create a state structure that is fragmented, decentralized, and accountable. Separation of powers allows different branches of government to 'check and balance' one another. The United States exhibits the foreign policy tendencies of both a democracy and a weak state. The open structure of Congress and its frequent elections provides access to the government for individuals and groups that seek to affect foreign policy. Aversion to taxation, another aspect of American anti-statism, has made state-building difficult and led to a consistent under-funding of the public sector. Mobilization of the state has been dependent upon outside security threats, or similar systemic shocks.

Anti-statism is integral to liberal republicanism because strong states—governmental apparatuses that are large in size, amply equipped with violent capabilities, and uncontestedly authoritative—are seen as inherent threats to popular security and liberty. American anti-statism sometimes spawns ridiculously paranoid suspicions. For example, as the internationalist project started to bear fruit, popular anti-statism has produced a strong fear and hostility toward international organizations, thought to be seeds of a dark end of history in one-world despotism. In this view, world governance and organization, being big and further away, are less accountable and less checkable, and therefore intrinsically undesirable.

Over time, American anti-statism has been severely compromised by the need to combat foreign threats. The state and war feed on one another, and the single most important factor in overcoming the institutional and attitudinal barriers to American state-building has come from war. The Civil War, and then the First World War, produced great rises in the size and capacities of the federal government, which then quickly declined with the return of peace. But beginning with the mobilization for the Second World War and extending through the long and perilous decades of the Cold War, the United States built a permanent strong state structure, heavily centred on military capability, that went far beyond the vision and constitutional architecture of the founders. The erection of this American national security state has been largely popular, often wildly so, at the same time as many Americans still voice severe doubts about its longer-term impact on limited government (Johnson 2004).

Over this long war, a peculiarly American style of militarism has arisen. The cumulative weight of a high and enduring mortal foreign threat, a vast military and military industrial complex, and large numbers of politically active veterans has combined to produce increasing militarism in American culture and national life. This has also been fed by the extraordinary 'gun culture' in the United States, marked by widespread firearms ownership, chronic domestic gun violence, and the widespread conviction that gun possession is not only necessary as a check on criminals, and possibly even foreign invaders, but also on the US government itself, making gun possession the most basic right of a free society. These features of the American cultural landscape loom large in the increasing scepticism of liberal Europeans and others about the United States. But this militarism may have much more bark than bite because it coexists with an extreme reluctance to have Americans killed in battle, and a startling willingness to abandon wars that become more costly in blood than anticipated. Popular theatrical militarism is also tempered by the extreme reluctance of the US military to go to war except in overwhelmingly important and readily winnable conflicts.

American capitalism and prosperity

Among major states, the United States is the most distinctly pro-capitalist, and one of its most distinctive features is high levels of economic growth and widely distributed prosperity. America was capitalist or proto-capitalist from the beginning, a utopia of Lockean liberalism. This pervasive capitalist individualism has figured prominently in the seminal interpretations of the American experience, from Tocqueville in the middle of the nineteenth century to Louis Hartz in the middle of the twentieth. Because the United States was so purely capitalist, American political development has been profoundly different from Europe's, and many of the major features of European life, most notably the feudal stage with its *ancien régime* and working-class socialist movements, are almost completely absent in the United States.

Much of the attractiveness of freedom in the United States has been associated with the freedom to own and accumulate property. The early success of liberal capitalism in the United States was made possible by the availability of large quantities of cheap rich agricultural land.

The social mobility produced by economic advance fostered by abundant land in early America reinforced the belief that individual effort would lead to individual achievement, and helped account for the widespread economic equality, which was in stark contrast to the extreme socio-economic stratification virtually everywhere else. This widespread economic opportunity also reinforced American anti-statism by creating widespread strata of prosperous property owners attached to capitalist ideas, hostile to both a large and intrusive state and socialist redistribution.

America's deep commitment to capitalism and private property has had a significant impact on US foreign policy. American expansion in the nineteenth century was propelled by Americans seeking new and more abundant land for private ownership. Since the late nineteenth century, the United States has intervened abroad to protect American property beyond its borders (Kinzer 2006: 9–108) and has repeatedly sought to 'open' other countries to trade and investment. And much of twentieth-century American foreign policy, from the Spanish American War to the Marshall Plan and the erection of the General Agreement on Tarriffs and Trade (GATT) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), is intimately connected to the interests of American corporations. This deep support for capitalism and private property also contributed to the strong American opposition to third world nationalists. In Guatemala, Iran, Chile, and elsewhere, the US government supported violent coups of right-wing groups to overthrow left-leaning regimes (Kinzer 2006: 111–216), contradicting American support for democracy, and any government, whether elected or not, which favoured the seizure of foreign property ('nationalization') and redistribution. The Soviet Union seemed so threatening to Americans not just because it was a very powerful great power, but also because it was the central base of a worldwide movement to eliminate private property.

Trade policy is the most consequential domain where American capital has sought to strengthen and use state power, rather than oppose it. American trade policy has changed several times in major ways, and from the beginning trade policy has been a central political topic, pitting different interests and regional 'sections' against one another. Initially, under the sway of Jefferson's vision of a decentralized agricultural polity of free proprietor yeomen farmers, and in the interest of the vast majority of Americans who lived and worked on farms, the United States pursued a low-tariff policy, and during this period the United States was part of the colonial 'periphery' in the capitalist world system. Like Brazil, Canada, and Latin America, the United States was mainly an exporter of unfinished raw materials and importer of manufactured goods from Europe. But the alternative economic vision of protectionism had been articulated from the beginning, most notably by the first secretary of the treasury, Alexander Hamilton, in his *Report on Manufacturers* (1790). This protectionist programme was fully implemented during the Civil War when the new Republican Party (in a congressional supermajority with the South absent) established a national currency, a national banking system, and a high tariff to protect American industry. Behind this tariff wall, progressively raised across the decades of Republican Party ascendancy, the United States rapidly industrialized and grew into the world's economic colossus.

MAJOR DEBATES AND THEIR IMPACT 3.1: EXCEPTIONALISM AND IDEOLOGY

To what extent is American exceptionalism a reality or an ideology that justifies imperial behaviour? Throughout history, many states, both great and small, have claimed some degree of 'specialness' and exceptionalism. In fact, it is exceptional to find a state or a people that does not feel that they are in some ways special. This is especially the case when that historical state has been strong and/or had expansionist tendencies. One only has to think of Ancient Rome, or the Greek city state of Sparta.

In a sense, then, exceptionalism as an ideology has run throughout history and has often coincided with an imperial foreign policy that serves to justify conquest and overseas expansion. The exceptionalism of the imperial state can be justified in a number of ways that may include a claim to cultural or civilizational greatness (Christianity, democracy, or a civilizing mission) or it may instead rely upon a claim to economic development (capitalism as the end point of history). In some extreme cases, exceptionalism as an ideology may reside in the exceptional state's military preponderance and this can be married to a racial narrative of superiority. Nazi Germany would be a good example of this, and in a lesser sense imperial Britain with its superiority of arms and sense of 'white man's burden'. The central debate then is what comes first, exceptionalism as an ideology or exceptionalism as material fact? As Weber argued, do the cultural enabling conditions and self-belief precede the state of exceptionality, or do the economic, political, or strategic conditions have to be in place before the ideology of exceptionalism develops? Ask yourself, would America regard itself as exceptional if it were a middle-ranking power on the world stage?

Yet another reversal—back to free trade—was triggered by the Great Depression, and the realization that the United States, as the world's largest and lowest-cost industrial producer, could gain from free trade. This shift in economic interest combined with the realization that the spread of capitalism was vital to securing weak democracies against communist domination. With this new power and agenda the United States became, from Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency through to the present, the leader in the worldwide effort to lower tariffs and other trade barriers. This effort not only helped trigger fifty years of global economic growth, but also produced the GATT (now WTO) and ancillary pro-capitalist global organizations and institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

The American state has sought to pursue an 'open door' policy of opening up the global economy to American inward investment and has opposed governments that have sought to resist American expansionism.

Peculiar Americanism

Ethnicity, immigration, and foreigners

The full story of immigration to the United States is very complex, but a broad pattern, identified by the political historian Michael Lind as the 'three American nations', captures much of it. The first American nation, 'Anglo-America', was composed of settlers and their descendants mainly from England and Scotland, and this group and its mores continue to provide the base template of American ethno-national identity. Anglo-America was white Protestant and English-speaking, and these traits, combined with an affiliation for Britain and other British settler colonies, have remained prominent features of the American scene. The second American nation, 'Euro-America', resulted from the immigration of a vast tide of people, from the early 1800s to the early 1900s, from all over Europe, particularly Germany, Ireland, Italy, and eastern Europe. Not speaking English, often Catholic, and poor, these new Americans largely, but not completely, 'assimilated' to the traits of the earlier Anglo nation.

Finally, beginning in the 1960s, with the reform of immigration laws to permit more Asians, Africans, and Latin Americans, combined with sudden influxes of political refugees from revolutions and wars in places like Cuba and Vietnam, there has emerged the third American nation, 'global America'. As earlier, the new wave of immigrants are partly assimilating, but also retain far more active contact, through modern air transport and communications, with extended networks of people in the countries from which they emigrated.

Religion

The desire to practise freely their religious beliefs and realize their religious ideals inspired the founders of several of the early English colonies in North America. American religion has been floridly diverse, benefiting from robust freedom of religion and the 'separation of church and state'. Various strands of Protestant Christianity have been particularly prevalent and influential, in ways both direct and subtle. The overall Christian theme of equality reinforced democracy and the overall Protestant theme of individualism reinforced liberalism and capitalism. Both the Calvinist and evangelical Baptist tendencies of early American religious sects, such as the Puritan founders of Massachusetts Bay Colony, have also infused American life and foreign policy with a messianic sense that the United States was, in the often-quoted words of the seventeenth-century Puritan preacher John Winthrop, a religiously special place, a 'city upon a hill' that would inspire and help lead mankind from wickedness. Overall, American religious participation helped compensate for the sharper edges of capitalism and provided large numbers of Americans with an intense experience of community otherwise absent in the starkly individualistic society. Periodic religious revivals of fervour and inspiration also motivated major movements of social reform such as the Abolitionist attack on slavery and the Temperance movement's attack on alcohol consumption, as well as the recent movement for African–American civil rights (Morone 2003).

Religiously inspired social reform and messianism in America has also directly spilled into the international arena. Throughout the nineteenth century, when the United States government was small and inward-looking, American missionaries were actively proselytizing around the world, but also providing services such as basic education and medical care and promoting human rights and foreign aid (Mead 2001: 141–7). Yet at the same time, religious leaders provided a rationale for American imperialism as part

of an effort to spread Christianity to heathen peoples, and missionaries also served as the vanguard of American imperial military and economic expansion (LaFeber 1963). In recent decades Protestant evangelicals and Catholics have been active and influential in opposing abortion and contraception services, as well as in mobilizing opposition to extreme human rights abuses, such as the genocide occurring in the Darfur region of Sudan. Various American Christian groups have also become increasingly active and influential in supporting the United States' pro-Israel policy in the Middle East, and their theme of 'crusades' has become another volatile element in the current war on terrorism against violent Islamic fundamentalism.

Race

The inheritance from Europe with which the United States was born was not purely liberal, but also included a radically illiberal system of African slavery, whose presence and eradication profoundly shaped American politics and foreign policy. As part of the colossal global predation and audacious outburst of mercantile, imperial, and colonial activities that brought the global economy and state system into existence in the early modern period, the Europeans coercively moved millions of people, mainly from Africa, across the oceans to labour in the New World's plantations and mines. This brutally coercive economic system was legitimized by, and in turn legitimized, virulently racist attitudes that remained long after slavery was abolished. Tocqueville caught the stark reality when he observed that each of the three 'hostile races' of North America 'follows a separate destiny' and that 'two unlucky races [i.e. Africans and Amerindians] suffer the effects of tyranny, and, though their afflictions are different, they have the same people [i.e. whites] to blame for them' (Tocqueville 1988: 317).

African slavery and white racism stand as the greatest exception to the exceptionally liberal character of the United States. The fact that this brutal system of slavery and racism was so thoroughly capitalist underscores the fact that markets are not inherently free but can be compatible with extreme conditions of unfreedom unless they are embedded in a fuller matrix of political and civil rights. Throughout the nineteenth century, racist ideas of Anglo-Saxon superiority shaped and legitimized 'manifest destiny', providing a convenient justification for the displacement of Indian tribes and Mexicans. The racism of America's dominant white populations, nourished by various 'scientific' Darwinist theories, reached its climax in the oppressive and bloody conquest and rule of the Philippines in the early years of the twentieth century (Kramer 2006).

The slow and halting but cumulatively largely successful struggle to eradicate first slavery and then institutionalized racism over the history of the American republic has had wide-ranging effects. During the first decades of the American republic, conflicts over slavery touched upon everything, and part of the reason the American Constitution created such a weak state was that slave owners, the dominant economic and political group in the southern states, feared that too strong a government could potentially jeopardize their peculiar institution. Catalysed by growing liberal Abolitionist sentiment in the non-slave states in the North, the abolition of slavery was only accomplished by the Union victory in the major bloodbath of the Civil War (1861–5), by far the most destructive war in American history. The second lengthy phase of the African–American liberation struggle began after the Union armies left the South in 1876 and the white southerners quickly erected an elaborate system of legalized, or de jure, segregation based on so-called 'Jim Crow' laws. Struggles against this domestic regime of racial oppression stretched across decades and it was only in the middle years of the twentieth century, when landmark liberal Supreme Court rulings combined with a mass mobilization of African Americans and their white liberal allies in the Civil Rights movement, that formal equality was achieved. Throughout the era of segregation, white southerners, operating as a political bloc and occupying key positions in Congress, not only resisted pressure for domestic change, but also vigilantly opposed US participation in any international human rights regime or organization asserting universal rights, fearing they might weaken the South's system of discrimination. As late as the 1980s, the United States, while serving as the leader of the free world against communist tyranny, was also, embarrassingly, a principal ally of the white apartheid regime in South Africa and this was only reversed by sustained international pressure and the mobilization of a boycott of corporations doing business there.

In the twentieth century, America's growing global role also contributed to the weakening of racial barriers and the delegitimization of racism. As part of the national mobilization for the Civil War and the world wars, African Americans were drawn into military service in large numbers, increasing the ability of African Americans to claim full citizenship. During

the Cold War racial segregation was seen as an embarrassment and liability in the battle for 'hearts and minds' in the third world, a major battleground of the struggle. American segregationist policy, in contrast to the official communist hostility toward racism, meant that racism had become a national security liability. The first important step toward desegregation was the integration of the US Army through an executive order from President Truman at the close of the Second World War. The Civil Rights movement eventually succeeded in ending lawful segregation in the United States and domestic race relations have continued to slowly improve. Racism is now much less powerful a factor than in early periods of American history, a change reflected in the rise in legal emigrants from nations of the developing world.

Race, religion, and immigration have served to make America a 'melting pot' that has been infused with successive cultural waves.

This form of regeneration and vibrancy has added to the sense of American exceptionalism.

foreign policy. But in the overall trajectory of American foreign policy they are ultimately less central to the story of American exceptionalism than the truly central axis of the story, which derives both in fact and in perception from the liberal republican core of the American polity. And in turn these liberal influences on US foreign policy have been bounded by the exigencies of great power politics because the United States, like all states living in international anarchy full of uncertain threats and opportunities, has been by necessity keenly attentive to the requirements, often arduous, of the great power balance of power politics. The USA did not emerge so successfully through its long succession of wars by ignoring the demands of power and interest, but by being exceptional in their mastery. But the USA is not simply another great power with a particularly outstanding track record. Its deeply liberal character has powerfully shaped its foreign policy. Sometimes the influence of its liberal democratic polity has worked in ways that contradict the dictates of *Realpolitik* and, even more importantly,

KEY POINTS

- American liberal exceptionalism has pushed US foreign policy in directions that contradict and transcend the imperatives of power politics. The effect of exceptionalism is visible in American impulses toward the seemingly contradictory positions of isolationism during times of weakness, and internationalism during times of relative strength.
- The founding of the US was a manifestation of the original American internationalism. Following the War of Independence, thirteen sovereign states replaced their ad hoc confederation with a 'states-union' in order to replace international anarchy with binding law and organization.
- Throughout most of the nineteenth century the USA adopted an isolationist posture fostered by national weakness relative to European powers and the republican ideological belief that the United States should serve as a model for the rest of the world and focus on internal progress rather than external interactions.
- The twentieth century marked a major departure in American foreign policy: the rise of the USA to world power status under the strategy of liberal internationalism. As changes in technology shrank the globe, the United States sought to remake the world in its own liberal image while at the same time generating sufficient state capacity to prevent the eclipse of the free world by the twin totalitarian threats of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.
- The end of the Cold War and subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union produced an American-led global liberal hegemony. This 'moment' of liberal triumphalism was seemingly undermined by the Bush administration, suggesting an uncertain future for liberal internationalism and America's exceptional effect on the international system.

Exceptionality and foreign policy

Liberalism, exceptionalism, and US foreign policy

Various strands of American particularistic national identity, whether ethnic, religious, or racial, have been omnipresent in, and often influential on, American

in ways that escape and transcend it. What is exceptionally liberal about American foreign policy can be captured in two seemingly contradictory patterns: isolationism and internationalism.

At first glance isolationism and internationalism appear to be unrelated, indeed almost opposite, approaches to foreign policy. Isolationism is introverted, and seeks as much non-involvement as possible.

Internationalism is extroverted and seeks to make the world more like the United States. In reality, of course, American foreign policy has never been purely isolationist or internationalist. At times it has been an odd mixture of both, and it has also exhibited other unrelated tendencies.

In the American context, however, isolationism and internationalism are profoundly linked. They can best be viewed as different strategies to achieve the same essentially liberal ends, but in different circumstances. Isolationism served liberal ends when the United States was relatively isolated (and isolatable) and weak. Internationalism serves liberal ends when the United States is inescapably interdependent with other states and when it is strong enough to influence a larger sphere beyond its borders (Deudney 2007).

In order to examine the actual roles that American exceptionalism, both liberal and illiberal, has played in the overall trajectory of American foreign policy, it is necessary to study these roles in the different major epochs of American foreign policy, and to see how they have intertwined with the pursuit by the United States of security, power, and interest in the often harshly competitive international system. Five periods, partially overlapping, deserve closer examination: the founding (1774–87), hemispheric isolationism (1787–1917), great power rivalry and world war (1900–91), liberal internationalism (1919–present), and unipolarity, the war on terrorism, and unilateralism (1991–present).

Original American federal internationalism

Narratives of American foreign policy commonly begin after the founding of the government of the United States by the Constitution of 1787. In reality, however, the founding itself was not solely a 'unit-level' event of 'state formation' but rather had far-reaching 'international' aspects, with deep connections to what would later come to be called liberal internationalism. Although it is commonly held that American internationalism is largely a phenomenon of the twentieth century, and particularly the later post–Second World War part of it, in reality the United States, as a state, had extensive 'international' internal features that were pronounced at its founding and in the decades that followed. The deep historical roots of internationalism in the American political experience are often overlooked by international theorists, particularly realists, but they provide a template for twentieth-century liberal internationalism.

The founding of the United States took place through a process of confederation and federation among thirteen separate states. The organization of the British colonial activity in the New World was highly decentralized and colonies had a significant measure of local autonomy. After banding together to reach their common goal of independence, the thirteen states then formed a more substantial union with a weak central government. This negotiated union was a 'peace pact' that created the 'Philadelphian System' as an explicit antithesis to the Westphalian system of hierarchies in anarchy that marked European politics (Deudney 1995; Hendrickson 2003). The small professional army, minuscule national bureaucracy, and substantial state militias prevented the resolution of state and sectional conflicts through coercion.

The politics of antebellum America was one of internal sectional rivalry, between the 'free' and slave states. The vexed question of western expansion, potentially upsetting the intersectional balance within the union, was dealt with by diplomatic settlements, the so-called 'Great Compromises' of 1820, 1833, and 1850, that were negotiated between the sections, much like the diplomatic deals of European nation states with each other. When the issue of slavery could be finessed no longer, the sections fought a war that was conducted as an international or interstate war between clashing uniformed armies that largely followed the European laws of interstate war, belying its label as the 'Civil War'. The Union victory in the War of Southern Seccession saved the US from dissolution and deepened its liberal character by eradicating slavery. But the Union victory and the assumption of authority and capacity by the central government also marked the evolution of the states-union quasi-international system into something resembling a federal national state. Despite this change, the idea that the United States is, or at least was, as much a liberal 'states-union' as a 'liberal state' continues to serve as an inspiration and model to liberal internationalist aspirations to replace international anarchy with binding international law and organization.

The isolationist liberal republic

During its first century of existence, the United States' foreign policy centred on North America and to a lesser extent the western hemisphere. Americans

were largely inward looking, highly focused on issues of internal development. The United States was relatively isolated and therefore had the option of pursuing a policy of isolationism. As the United States was weak, excessive interaction with European states would be on unfavourable terms, and would risk corrupting the American experiment. Instead of taking an active role in international politics, the United States would seek to be an example for the rest of the world to follow by perfecting its own liberal democratic political system and avoiding the corrupting influences of European war and diplomacy. Avoidance of foreign entanglements was a guidepost of American foreign policy. Despite this aspiration, the United States was in an international political and military system that it could neither fully escape nor significantly control. Because it had to fear European predation, the United States necessarily had to pay close attention to European politics and the balance that kept its powerful states in some degree of check. Because of its integration into the world economy centred in Europe, trade and the protection of trade played major roles in US foreign policy, and these economic connections drew the United States into war with European states during both the Quasi-War of the 1790s with France, and the War of 1812 with Britain.

Isolationism also appealed to Americans because of their fear of a large standing army, a fear derived from republican ideology and reinforced by recent experience leading up to the War of Independence. It was thought that international engagement would inevitably lead to conflict and war. Furthermore, war would require large-scale extraction of societal resources to fund a large standing army. High taxes and military dictatorship would become necessary to effectively compete within the European state system. Therefore isolationism had beneficial implications for the American constitutional project.

In 1823, the Monroe Doctrine extended isolationism to the western hemisphere with the declaration that the United States would not allow European powers to involve themselves in the domestic affairs of New World republics. This approach had an imperialistic dimension, in that Central and South American states were assumed to only have partial sovereignty, but the main effect was to assert separation between Europe and the Americas. Within a general framework of isolationism, the United States pursued an abbreviated policy of imperialism in the Spanish–American War of 1898. This brief, one-sided war also marked a step toward the abandonment of isolationism. While ejecting Spain from the western hemisphere was the unfinished business of the Monroe Doctrine, the war also led to an expansion of American interests deep into the Pacific Ocean and East Asia with the occupation of the Philippines and annexation of Hawaii in 1898. Americans were, however, highly conflicted about the occupation of the Philippines and the counter-insurgency warfare against Philippine nationalists that followed. Many also felt that imperialism was inconsistent with the Constitution.

Great power rivalry and world war

The second century of American foreign policy was very different from the first. Isolationism became increasingly unworkable as America's relative isolation was diminished by the new industrial technologies of communication and transportation. With the 'abolition of distance' as it was referred to in the later nineteenth century, Europe and its great powers and their wars were now no longer buffered and distant from the United States. Beginning between 1890 and 1914, and abruptly ending in 1989–91, the United States was drawn into a series of world wars and struggles that profoundly shaped not only international politics, but the position of the United States in the system. Drawn late into the First World War, the United States, after proposing a largely aborted scheme for an international peacekeeping league, pulled back into a semblance of hemispheric isolation. Initially also uninvolved in the wars in Europe beginning in 1939 and in Asia in 1936, the United States was inexorably drawn into the conflict and was able to serve as the most successful combatant due to the rapid military mobilization of its massive industrial base. With the war having two main victors, the Soviet Union and the United States fell into a struggle for global mastery that lasted over four decades and saw both sides deploy vast nuclear arsenals of global-range strike weapons, whose even partial use would have wiped out much of urban-industrial civilization on the planet. These total stakes seemed raised even further because the two blocs represented the vanguard of radically opposing socio-economic and political systems, which both sides believed were destined to become globally universal.

CONTROVERSIES 3.1: IDEALISM IN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

One of the exceptional features of US foreign policy is the extent to which values affect it. A consistent debate in American foreign policy is what role values should play in foreign policy decision making. One perspective is that values should be the driving force in determining the policies that the USA pursues. From this perspective, US foreign policy should be based on a sincere commitment to values such as democracy, human rights, rule of law, and economic opportunity. The rationale for this approach is that American values are attractive to the rest of the world and policies based on these values enhance American legitimacy and increase the soft power of the United States. A second approach is that values should play no role in the decisions made by American leaders. Instead, US foreign policy should be based on a 'realistic' appraisal of national interests. These interests included pursuing policies that increase American power, such as gaining access to foreign markets, and maintaining military and economic superiority. Scholars, policy analysts, and politicians that follow this approach often condemn US foreign policy as being overly moralistic and unrealistic. A third way of conceptualizing the role of ideas is to view them as instrumental. In other words, values are a means of achieving a goal. For example, some international relations theorists argue that the American people will only support an internationalist US foreign policy if they feel it is consistent with American values. Thus, American leaders must frame their preferred policy in terms of how it fosters American values.

For America as an 'exceptional' state, these conflicts had two quite contradictory consequences. On the one hand, the specialness of the United States in the project of freedom as Americans understood it became greatly magnified. The United States became the leader and protector of liberal democracies everywhere, and had it not been for American power and purpose between 1940 and 1990, liberal democracy might well have been eliminated from the planet. The United States was no longer simply the leading exemplar of the project of freedom, but the indispensable 'leader of the free world' whose every major action seemed ripe with world historical significance. On the other hand, the rigorous exigencies of these struggles forced the United States to become what it had always claimed to fear becoming: a polity with a vast standing military and state security apparatus, and a vast panoply of allies, clients, and protectorates. Its grand strategy, while still wrapped in the rhetoric of liberal purpose, was in actuality first and foremost about survival and success in the global great power system, and guided by the precepts of realism(see Controversies 3.1). While democracy survived, and in some ways even thrived alongside the national security state, and while American lack of interest in formal territorial annexation kept its imperial presence from crossing over the line, at least as historically defined, into empire, there was no escaping the fact that the United States had become in important ways quite ordinary as a state, rather like the European national states that the founders had believed to be the antithesis of a republic.

Internationalist liberalism and world order

As impressive as America's success in the great power rivalries of the twentieth century is, what is most exceptional in American foreign policy is not the US's ascent from a weak regional state to the top of the global great power system, but rather the ways in which it has sought to remake the world according to a liberal vision. This vision is in its logic an extension of the principles of the original American internationalism of the founding. The trigger for the articulation and pursuit of the liberal one-world vision was the same as the move to great power global balancing, namely the realization that as the world shrunk the survival of the United States Constitution required a foreign policy of global scope. As outlined by President Woodrow Wilson and progressive theorists in the early years of the twentieth century, the American liberal internationalist project has two overall aims: to abridge international anarchy through the erection of binding international law and organization, and to change the other units in the system away from hierarchy toward constitutional democracy. Of course this project has never been the sole aim of US foreign policy, which has been, by necessity, focused on the balance of power among the great powers. Many Americans have been ambivalent or hostile to the liberal internationalist project, and the United States has not always been a consistent adherent to the international arrangements it has played such a major role in creating. Nor has this project been pursued without or against power, but rather as the aim of power.

This basic vision has produced a wide array of efforts, whose real-world impact has ranged from abject failure to stunning success. In the early years of the twentieth century, the United States was the leading force behind the creation of a World Court to arbitrate disputes among states. At the end of the First World War, Wilson's ambitious proposal for a League of Nations was a key, if ultimately unsuccessful, part of the settlement of the Versailles Conference. In the wake of the near disaster of the Great Depression and the Second World War, the United States made a much more serious, sustained, and successful effort to erect a new liberal international order, with measures such as the establishment of the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions (IMF and World Bank), the multilateral free trade regime under the auspices of GATT, numerous proposals for bilateral and multilateral nuclear arms control (the Baruch Plan, Atoms for Peace, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaties of the Nixon era), and the emergence of a range of global international regimes, varying greatly in almost every regard. These measures, taken as a whole, provided a greater degree of world public order and governance than had ever before existed in history.

Unipolarity, war on terrorism, and unilateralism

The fifth, and still unfolding, period of US foreign policy was inaugurated with the unexpected collapse of the Soviet Union, an event which shifted the overall international system from Soviet–American bipolarity to American unipolarity. The period since the end of the Cold War is still unfolding, but has been unexpectedly marked by great inconstancy in the direction of US foreign policy.

The first part of this period, stretching from the end of the Cold War to the two Clinton administrations, is in many ways the historical high-water mark of American power and influence, and was accompanied by an array of remarkably progressive developments in world politics. The heady optimism and sense of breakthrough and potential of this period found expression in notions that the long-envisioned liberal 'end of history' was at hand. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the communist project it had spearheaded meant that for the first time in history the liberal coalition of states was unmistakably hegemonic globally. The first Bush administration, following in the steps of Reagan's breakthrough diplomacy with Soviet reform leader Mikhail Gorbachev, negotiated a set of far-reaching nuclear arms reduction agreements, the Soviet withdrawal from Eastern Europe, and the reunification of Germany as a liberal democracy. Throughout the 1990s, the liberal cause globally relentlessly pushed forward, as dozens of previously authoritarian or totalitarian states moved rapidly to try to become democracies, as the European Union both widened its membership and deepened its institutional capacities, as NATO expanded to encompass many former Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe and beyond, and as the liberal international trading regime was both strengthened with the establishment of the WTO and widened with the admission of many previously communist or socialist economies. The United Nations also seemed to have new possibilities without the Cold War deadlock, and under its auspices members of the international community made increased efforts to deal with humanitarian crises, failed states, and ethnic cleansing and genocide, and to establish a permanent international court for crimes against humanity.

Somewhat unexpectedly, however, the administration of George W. Bush took US foreign policy on very different paths, marked by a near reversal of American leadership in strengthening international law, organizations, and regimes. 9/11 and the Bush administration's responses to it greatly amplified the intensity and impact of this new foreign policy direction. Even before 9/11 the administration had assumed a largely new American role as the leading opponent and critic of most international organizations and regimes, and the leading laggard in dealing with issues arising from global interdependence, perhaps most notably global warming. The administration withdrew from landmark arms control treaties, sought to impede the establishment of the International Criminal Court, effectively scuttled the Kyoto Protocol, and simply walked away from an almost completed negotiation to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention.

Observers of this American turn against the liberal internationalist agenda emphasized the new tendency for the United States to act unilaterally. Of course all states, particularly large and powerful ones, routinely act unilaterally, and US foreign policy in the nineteenth century was largely unilateral. But against the twentieth-century American role as multilateral alliance leader and institution builder,

this turn (or return) marked a sharp departure from the policies of every administration since Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon seemed to draw an even sharper closure to the optimism and progress of the years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Initially, with world public opinion solidly behind it, the United States executed a quick and bold campaign to overthrow the Taliban regime in Afghanistan that had sponsored and sheltered the al-Qaeda leaders of the 9/11 attacks. But the Bush administration saw the attacks as harbingers of further far more serious attacks, possibly employing nuclear or biological weapons, and set in motion a far-reaching reconfiguration of American state capacities and foreign policy. On the domestic front, a giant new Department of Homeland Security was created, and the Bush administration began to claim (and act) as if the president, as commander-in-chief of the armed forces, was free to act in wartime outside the limits of international law and constitutional constraints.

Internationally, the initial success in Afghanistan was followed by the United States' invasion of Iraq. This invasion seems to have been motivated by several goals: to preclude the emergence of a revisionist and anti-American nuclear power, to sustain American hegemony and alliances in the Middle East oil-producing region vital to the entire world economy, and perhaps even to catalyse the emergence of democratic states in the region. Whatever its purposes, the American occupation of Iraq proceeded to bleed American strength and empowered the radical Islamic regime in Iran, which had previously been held partially in check by the Saddam Hussein dictatorship in Iraq. As a result of this, and the growing backlash against many measures of Bush's open-ended 'global war on terrorism', by the end of his second term both domestic and international support for the administration and its novel policies had almost completely evaporated.

In one sense the sudden turn of the United States in the Bush years marked a serious diminution of the exceptionalist liberal strand in US foreign policy. While still bellowing its claims to special status as the global palladium of liberty, the United States now acted with an updated version of the simple realist script, doing what immediate security threats seemed to make necessary, with little regard for their cost or international institutional fallout.

Conclusion

With the election of Barack Obama as president in 2008, the story of American exceptionalism, difference, and peculiarism took another series of new turns. Obama campaigned on a criticism of neo-conservative interventionism and the Iraq War, and in support of renewed American commitment to nuclear arms control and leadership in addressing global climate change. More generally, Obama promised to seek the extension of the domestic new liberal programme advanced by the New Deal and the Great Society, while also expansively affirming the need for American leadership in solving global problems.

Despite these hopes, Obama's presidency was most marked by a growing sense of American limits. There has been an increasing realization that American economic primacy, the wellspring of America's great difference in success as a great power, is inevitably waning, with profound implications for the future of American foreign policy. With the rise of China and India, along with the European Union, the overall international system is not unambiguously unipolar, but is rather increasingly multipolar. The recent global Great Recession, triggered by a combination of under-regulated financial institutions and over-extended consumers, produced increased unemployment in the US and diminished national output, and has reduced the attractiveness of the American model of capitalism and the resources available to sustain America's far-flung security commitments. When job training is being reduced in Detroit, it is hard for Congress to justify funding job training for former Taliban fighters in Afghanistan. Faced with these growing constraints, the foreign policy of the Obama administration was more modest in its objectives and its willingness to undertake further burdens and commitments.

Internationally, the immediate effect of Obama's election was what pollsters refer to as 'the Obama effect', a marked increase in the positive perception of the United States in foreign public opinion. Obama's receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize during his first year in office highlighted the great expectations that his election and programme elicited abroad, particularly

among European progressives. Hard realities, both at home and abroad, made the realization of these promises and expectations much more difficult than his supporters anticipated.

Ironically, Obama's immense popularity abroad also is a partial indicator of the waning of America as exceptional in its overall liberalism. The very extent of the success of liberal democratic capitalism, propelled to global preeminence in part by the American model and by American muscle, meant that the United States was now part of a much larger community of liberal democracies, and no longer an outlier in a world of non-liberal or anti-liberal states. Would the United States thus become a normal state or would it become exceptional in new ways?

Admired abroad for largely symbolic reasons, Obama at home was subject to relentless attack for essentially symbolic reasons. The overall tenor of American political discourse has become increasingly shrill, fueled by a furious, at times hysteric, assault on Obama by a phalanx of populist conservative commentators, many with voices amplified by sponsorship from the Australian media mogul Rupert Murdoch. These critics equated twentieth-century American liberalism's use of state power to achieve democratic and egalitarian goals, and to regulate the externalities associated with industrial society's interdependence, with socialism, communism, and totalitarianism. For these critics, the post–Second World War order of Europe was a model of statism run wild, a model to be avoided and not emulated. In effect these angry American libertarians and anti-statists want to undo the legacies of the progressive era, the New Deal, and the Great Society, returning the United States to the late nineteenth century.

Obama became a lightning rod for cultural anxieties rooted in America's ethnic, religious, and racial peculiarisms. The fact that Obama's father was a Muslim (from Kenya), his middle name (Hussein) has Muslim origins, and he lived for a few years in Indonesia, an overwhelmingly Muslim country, sparked an orgy of Islamophobic conspiracy theories and fantasies. This virulent anti-Obama hatred was particularly strong among white evangelical Christians, whites who resist and resent the progress achieved by African Americans in obtaining full rights as citizens, and those fearful of immigrants, both illegal and legal, from the global South.

Taken together, the rise of domestic partisan rancor, economic malaise, increasing inequality, and the shift of the international system raise serious doubts about the continued ability and willingness of the United States to play its historic post–Second World War role in the international system. How the legacies of American exceptionalism and peculiarism will evolve in these new circumstances remains to be seen.

QUESTIONS

1. Is America an exceptional country?
2. To what extent is US foreign policy characterized by either isolationism or internationalism?
3. How do we measure exceptionality, and is it an 'objective fact'?
4. Is the belief of exceptionalism an ideological construct?
5. Are exceptionalism and imperialism two sides of the same coin? Explain your answer
6. What is the basis of American exceptionalism?
7. To what extent was the belief in American exceptionalism rooted in American cultural history?
8. American exceptionalism is a logical outcome of the US's commitment to free markets and its victory in the Cold War. Critically discuss
9. Ethnic, religious, and racial difference have given the USA its exceptional nature. Critically discuss
10. To what extent is the USA a liberal power within world politics and in what ways does this influence the belief in exceptionality?

FURTHER READING

Deudney, D. (2007), *Bounding Power: Republican Security Theory from the Polis to the Global Village* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).

Deudney 'brings America back in' to international relations by showing how the construction of the American states-union in 1789 succeeded in preserving democracy in a system populated by predatory monarchical, despotic, and totalitarian nation states. Only against the backdrop of the long tradition of republican security theory can the importance of the USA fully be realized.

Hartz, L. (1991), *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich).

American exceptionalism emerges from a political culture dominated by 'absolute and irrational Lockean liberalism'. This conformist and unique national identity limits the effectiveness of American foreign policy by fostering a sense of intolerance toward different political, cultural, and economic systems.

Lieven, A. (2004), *America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press).

American identity is a composite of civic nationalism based on universalistic liberal values and chauvinistic nationalism based on religious and ethnic particularities. These two aspects of American exceptionalism foster contradictory impulses in US foreign policy: civil nationalism encourages a moderate internationalism while chauvinistic nationalism fosters isolationism, messianism, and, most ominously, imperialism.

Lipset, S. M. (1996), *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword* (New York: W. W. Norton).

As the most prominent contemporary advocate of the idea that America is qualitatively different from other countries, Lipset presents an analysis of how the American Creed—'antistatism, individualism, populism, and egalitarianism'—fosters exceptionalism in American politics, policy, and culture. One important finding is that American exceptionalism is 'double-edged', meaning that the USA is different from, but not necessarily better than, other countries.

Mead, W. R. (2001), *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How it Changed the World* (New York: Routledge).

American foreign policy is an expression of four sometimes complementary and sometimes contradictory traditions: Hamiltonian economic realism, Jeffersonian republican isolationism, Jacksonian populist militarism, and Wilsonian religious moralism. American foreign policy works best when it draws on the strengths of each tradition.

Nau, H. R. (2002), *At Home Abroad: Identity and Power in American Foreign Policy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).

The exceptionalist American identity prevents the United States from establishing a stable, moderate, internationalist foreign policy. Only when the USA realizes that American values have in large part come to dominate the international system will it finally feel 'at home abroad'.

Tocqueville, A. de (1988), *Democracy in America*, trans. G. Lawrence (New York: Perennial Library, Harper & Row).

Writing in the 1830s, Tocqueville studied the USA in the context of failed European social revolutions. He saw the USA as an exceptionally successful democracy rooted in mores, laws, political decentralization, and most importantly social equality.

You can find a range of online resources to support your learning at www.oup.com/uk/cox_stokes3e/.

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4

The US rise to world power, 1776–1945

Walter LaFeber

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Introduction

Americans like to think of themselves as a powerful nation and a vibrant democracy. At pivotal points in their history, they have also thought of the United States as an *empire*—that is, a collection of various tribes, states, or nations which their central government controlled. That they held this view is somewhat surprising. After all, in 1776 Americans opened a new chapter in world history by successfully rebelling against an empire—the great British Empire.

From the beginnings of United States history, then, 'empire' should have been a bad word. But it was not. Having grown up within the British Empire, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and other founders easily thought of their new nation as an empire—although, of course, a decent, democratic, and just empire, quite unlike the British model, which they condemned for having corrupt kings and exploited colonies. Once free to conduct their own foreign policies, Americans rapidly grew into a continental power stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. The Civil War of 1861–5 interrupted this era of landed expansion. But the war between North and South also cleared the way for triumphant northern capitalists to create by 1900 the world's number one industrial and agricultural power. Producing far more than they could consume, Americans naturally looked overseas for new markets. The search led them into economic competition with the great imperial powers (Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and Japan), and into military competition as well. Not surprisingly,

in the late 1890s Americans began to think again of themselves as an empire, only this time as an overseas (not merely a continental) empire.

But, as in 1776, they again also thought of themselves as different from the other imperialists. They saw themselves as representing middle-class order, democracy, and capitalistic success. And, as they demonstrated in the First and Second World Wars, they could build a highly efficient military to ensure their success. In 1945, that military power included the first atomic bombs.

Out of this stunning economic–military combination appeared the US foreign policies which dominated the post-1945 years. By 1991, the United States and its allies had defeated Russian communism to win the four-decades-long Cold War. Before as well as after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, DC, many Americans again thought of themselves as living in a nation which headed nothing less than a global empire—an empire now occupying some 700 military bases around the world, and with its economic and cultural power penetrating all corners of the globe (Johnson 2004; Ferguson 2004). This post-1991 version of American empire can be understood only by viewing it as the result of the previous two-and-a-half centuries.

Some widely noted authors thought this post-1991 US empire was good for both Americans and, indeed, the entire globe. Just as Americans had settled and developed a continent before 1945, these authors argued, so they could now bring order and development to crucial parts of a suffering, supposedly less civilized, world. Americans in the mid-nineteenth century had followed what they believed to be a 'manifest destiny' (a term first used in New York City and midwestern newspapers during the 1840s to indicate the right given by God to Americans to populate and develop the continent from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific). After 1917 and especially after 1991, they followed what they believed to be a new manifest destiny to stabilize, democratize, and profit from many parts of the globe.

From colonies to continental empire, 1776–1865

From their earliest days of independence, and even during the darkest days of their often-sputtering war against the British, Americans thought of their fortune in imperial terms. As the American Revolution ground down to its end in 1783, US soldiers, long unpaid by a bankrupt Congress, threatened to overthrow that Congress and install their commander, George Washington, as a virtual monarch. The general quickly stopped the uprising and possibly saved what was to be an American republic. He passionately condemned anyone 'who wickedly attempts to open the floodgates of civil discord and deluge our rising empire in blood' (Van Alstyne 1960: 1–20). Washington had no doubt that it was a 'rising empire'.

In 1787, representatives from the thirteen states met in Philadelphia to write a constitution, one that, among other things, created a strong presidency which could protect them in international economic struggles. Those struggles had not only exploited the weaker Americans, but easily turned into murderous wars. The Constitution appeared just in time. The French Revolution erupted in 1789, then in 1793–4 exploded into a wide-ranging conflict between France and Great Britain. Presidents Washington and John Adams deftly manoeuvred throughout the 1790s to protect US trade and prevent the Americans from being sucked into the European killing fields.

During these years a golden rule of US diplomacy became fixed in American minds: never tie up the country in alliances, especially with stronger European powers who could dictate terms. Instead, keep your complete freedom of action so you can seize all opportunities for expanding the nation's territory and providing security. Washington uttered a classic definition of this principle in his famous 'Farewell Address' of 1796: 'The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations, is in extending our commercial relations to have with them as little *political* connection as possible.' When Jefferson became president in 1801, he provided an equally famous pronouncement in his first inaugural address: 'Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none' (Gardner et al. 1976, vol. i: 56–65). If only Americans could maintain freedom of action, Jefferson concluded, there were few limits to their empire. '[I]t is impossible not to look forward to distant times, when our rapid multiplication will expand itself beyond [present] limits, and cover the whole northern, if not the southern continent,' he wrote a friend in 1801, 'with a people speaking the same language, governed in similar forms, and by similar laws' (Jefferson 1903, vol. x: 296).

Jefferson and his fellow Americans obviously did not think small. But the grave dangers inherent in

building empires nearly overwhelmed the Virginian at the beginning of his presidency. In 1801, France's ruler, Napoleon Bonaparte, was pushing Spain out of New Orleans and the vast Spanish holdings west of the Mississippi River. Napoleon intended to create a New World empire for France which would dwarf all others. Jefferson and secretary of state James Madison immediately saw that by controlling the port of New Orleans, Napoleon could dominate access to the Mississippi River, which drained the port.

Madison quickly identified the grave danger to the American empire. Perhaps the most influential member of the 1787 Constitutional Convention, he had constantly argued that Americans needed ever more territory because they produced so many children. Madison accurately did the arithmetic for his American multiplication table, as it became known (note Jefferson's use of 'multiplication' above). He concluded that the US population was actually doubling every 21–22 years. These families of six to twelve, and more, could not be allowed to overcrowd and corrupt eastern cities. They had to be encouraged to find their own space and income for their families in the west. Once in the west (or, as it is now known, the midwest), these families would depend on the magnificent river system linked to the Mississippi. If Napoleon held New Orleans and, consequently, controlled the Mississippi, it would be only a matter of time before those thousands of American settlers might have to become citizens of Napoleon's French empire.

Jefferson and Madison exerted intense diplomatic pressure on the French. They even mobilized the small US Army for a possible attack on New Orleans itself. Faced with Jefferson's growing opposition, Napoleon decided his better opportunity lay in reopening war against the British and attempting to conquer much of Europe. He consequently stunned Jefferson by offering in early 1803 to sell for $15 million not only New Orleans, but all of the former Spanish empire which reached from the Mississippi to the Rocky Mountains—and possibly beyond, although few at the time actually knew what lay in the Rockies and beyond. Americans suddenly more than doubled their territory, drove out the French, established complete control over the Mississippi, and gained their first vague claims to lands bordering the Pacific Ocean.

Now Jefferson confronted the central problem which would haunt US leaders from 1787 until the early twenty-first century, and no doubt long thereafter. Having obtained a territory which, he told a friend, would become an 'empire of liberty' for untold generations of Americans, how could the president maintain order and safely govern such a huge, distant holding (Ferguson 2004: 30–7)? New Orleans, for example, held criminals and others who had fled from the United States. They wanted no part of a US-controlled government. In 1776, Jefferson's Declaration of Independence had trumpeted the belief that people held 'inalienable rights'. In late 1803 as he had to deal with Louisiana, however, he ditched that belief. The president set up military control, not a democratic system, over New Orleans and the surrounding territory.

Jefferson believed in democracy, but he did not believe that all people could be trusted to make democracy work properly. Democracy, he knew, was not merely casting a vote. It required, among other things, a fair code of laws, the people's faith that their economic system functioned properly, and the settlers' allegiance to the central and state governments which made all this work.

Louisiana was thus made a part of the growing American empire, if not immediately given a democratic system. Then another severe danger loomed. As Britain and France again went to war after 1803, a series of crises between London and Washington on the high seas and along the US–Canadian border finally exploded into war in 1812.

Madison, now the president, planned not only to stop the British mistreatment of American ships and commerce. He also ordered the invasion of Canada in the hope of expanding the US landed empire northward. Many Canadians, however, had left the United States in the 1770s because they preferred living under London's rule. They fought back, virtually wiping out the US invaders. In 1814, British forces invaded and burned down Washington, DC. James and Dolly Madison fled in such a hurry that they left plates and utensils set for dinner on the executive mansion's dining table. A potential catastrophe was avoided only by several US naval victories, skilful American diplomacy at the peace negotiations in late 1814, and—especially—British preoccupation in the last months of their victory in Europe over Napoleon.

By 1815, with some twenty years of European wars finally ended, Americans seized the opportunities to expand their growing trade with now-peaceful Europe and also Latin American nations which were declaring their own independence of European colonialism. In 1823 Madison's successor as president, James Monroe,

declared that henceforth the United States would not tolerate any attempt by Europeans to restore their hold on these New World nations. This Monroe Doctrine was historic not because Americans had the military needed to keep Europeans away from the Americas. Such power would not appear until the 1890s. The Doctrine was a turning point because it announced the US belief that henceforth the Old World should no longer attempt to dominate the New. Three hundred years of European colonialism in the western hemisphere were over.

Or, to look at Monroe's announcement from another perspective (as many Europeans and Latin Americans certainly did), it was a declaration that since the United States was the most powerful of New World nations, its people would hereafter have the dominant voice in defining the western hemisphere's affairs. Monroe and his secretary of state, John Quincy Adams, had already demonstrated this dominance. Adams is ranked as the greatest secretary of state in American history, a ranking due in large part to his shrewd negotiations with a declining Spain between 1819 and 1821. Adams talked the Spanish into selling Florida (where many Americans had already settled) and giving the United States Spain's claims on the Pacific coast, in an arrangement known as the Continental Treaty. Adams's brilliance provided, finally, the formal, internationally recognized claim of Americans to that coast.

Adams barely missed taking Texas from Spain as well. But the American multiplication table took care of that. By the 1830s, Mexico (which then included the present state of Texas) had become independent of Spanish rule. Thousands of Americans moved into the weakly governed Texas region. Mexico had prohibited slavery, but slaveholders from US southern states easily moved west to establish Texan plantations. When Mexican officials tried to reassert their authority (and anti-slave laws), the new settlers fought back. Despite having 187 settlers wiped out at the battle of the Alamo, the rebels won a series of battles and established an independent country in 1836.

In 1845, newly elected president James K. Polk, a Tennessee slaveholder, worked out a deal in Congress to annex the region. Polk then used a dispute with Mexico over Texas's southern boundary as an excuse to declare war, invade Mexico itself, and demand what he most wanted: the Mexican northern regions, an area now including the states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah. Polk, in other words, launched a war of aggression. The conflict dragged on through 1847 as Mexico refused to surrender. Worst of all, the seemingly never-ending conflict ripped open a debate in Washington. That debate raged around a central question: whether slaveholders should be allowed to take their human property into the newly seized territory.

The seemingly inevitable (even in some minds, apparently blessed by God) rise of the United States to world power had become intimately tied to the question of whether this success story required the continual expansion of slavery as well. It was the slaveholders, after all, who exported an ever increasing amount of cotton and tobacco, which enriched the US economy. Congressional compromises in 1850 and 1854 tried to quiet the question by allowing the new states to decide on their own whether to be free or slave.

At first glance, these compromises seemed to be the answer. Indeed, giving the people at the grass roots the power to make such fundamental decisions (that is, by exercising their democratic rights) seemed happily American. But in the 1850s an ever larger number of those Americans violently disagreed with such a grass-roots, democratic solution. Living largely in the north-east and midwest, they believed it was evil to expand slavery, regardless of how it might be justified. Northern, non-slaveholding farmers especially thought it evil if they lost the chance to buy and exploit good western soil simply because slaveholders were protected by state law as they snapped up the land.

The slaveholders saw it quite differently. Correctly figuring that their multiplication table was not multiplying as rapidly as the North's, southerners believed it was only a matter of time until they would be outnumbered—and thus outvoted in Congress—whenever issues involving slavery arose. They also needed new land to replace the soil which cotton and tobacco growing depleted. Southerners thus demanded the annexation of possible slave lands to the south, particularly Cuba (where Spain had installed a vicious slave system for the sugar industry) and Central America.

At this point, Abraham Lincoln entered American history. By 1860 the fifty-one-year-old Illinois politician was a leading figure in the new Republican Party. The Republicans had been founded in 1854–5 to oppose the expansion of slavery. Lincoln was direct in declaring he would not interfere in states where it already existed. Given their dependence on continued expansion into Latin America, however, southerners bitterly condemned his and the Republicans' position of no more slave expansion. When Lincoln won the presidency in 1860, the slaveholding states prepared

to leave the Union. A last-minute compromise tried to avert civil war. One part of the deal attempted to pull the southerners back in by guaranteeing federal protection for slavery south of the Kentucky–Missouri boundary lines. Lincoln rightly understood that this provision opened the way for seizing and extending American slavery into areas as far south as Cuba and other Caribbean nations. He rejected the compromise. And so the killing began.

Lincoln became the first president to say 'no' to the continued expansion of Washington's and Jefferson's landed empire. Throughout the 1830s to 1850s, Americans liked to believe this expansion was part of what they termed manifest destiny: an expansion, that is, watched over by a God who blessed the spread of American democracy and capitalism. By 1864 to early 1865, however, after three years of terrible war, Lincoln was questioning why this God, claimed (as the president noted) by both North and South, would allow the nation to suffer such horrible bloodshed.

After his assassination in April 1865, and as the war finally ended, few of his fellow Americans picked up Lincoln's tortured, fundamental question: if the remarkable US expansionism of both territory and a democratic system was manifest destiny, why did it climax in the Civil War?

KEY POINTS

- Driven by their quests for both more territory for their multiplying families and wealth and security for themselves, Americans set out after their War for Independence to establish a continental empire.
- Jefferson called this an 'empire for liberty', but he carefully did not give democratic rights to the freshly acquired New Orleans region, and by the early nineteenth century the United States had become part of an empire containing human slavery.
- Lincoln determined to stop the territorial expansion of this slavery and thus helped bring about the Civil War.

From old empire to new empire, 1865–1913

The North's victors had happier subjects to think about after 1865. When the southerners left Washington in 1861, the northerners who now controlled Congress quickly passed a series of laws which created a foundation for the American industrial and financial complexes that soon dominated world affairs. The legislation included, for example, a much higher tariff to protect northern producers against cheap European goods. Such a tariff had long been opposed by southerners, whose plantation owners wanted access to the cheapest (that is, British) industrial products. Now protected by the ever rising tariff, northern steel makers such as Andrew Carnegie joined the creators of other new industries, such as John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company, to build an industrial complex which became the world's most productive by 1900. A new, overseas economic empire was being developed by Americans.

Landed expansion did continue. In 1867, Alaska was bought for $7.5 million from Russia. By 1875, trade deals were made with Hawaii, deals which led some twenty-three years later to the annexation of those islands. But this post-1865 landed expansion was radically different from the pre-1860 expansionism. The earlier expansion was one of settlement across adjoining territory. When native Indian tribes occupied those lands, or at times tried to fight back against the white settlements, the Indians were killed or forced to live on reservations. The new, post-1865 expansion, however, was not the movement of settlers across the land, but of traders and financers across the oceans. Americans had once viewed these oceans as great walls which helped protect them against foreign invasion. They now viewed them as great highways on which they could ship ever larger amounts of their farm and industrial goods to foreign markets.

Americans continued to follow the advice of Washington and Jefferson not to form any overseas political alliances. The resulting freedom of action allowed the United States to stay out of squabbles in Europe and Asia, while selling goods to all sides. It also led newly wealthy American families to marry their daughters and sons to European, especially British, aristocratic families. The Europeans thus obtained American money, the Americans obtained European class. These links even helped determine which side Americans would favour, and finance, in later wars.

Fuelled by the industrial revolution of the late nineteenth century, which produced the first telephones, automobiles, aeroplanes, and steel complexes as well as the transatlantic marriages, US foreign policy's focus moved from the North American continent to the markets of Europe, Latin America, and Asia. This was nothing less than a 'new empire', as one influential

observer termed it at the time (Adams 1902). In this new empire, landed expansion aimed primarily not to find new areas for Americans to settle. It instead intended to develop naval bases, an isthmian canal in Central America, and coaling stations to protect and accelerate US overseas trade.

In 1874, the United States also embarked on this new era when, for the first time, it began consistently to sell more goods overseas than it bought. (This favourable balance of trade lasted more than seventy-five years until the expenses of the Cold War created steady deficit trade balances in the 1960s and after.) US international commerce generated such great profits that New York City was becoming a world financial centre. By 1904–5, some of the city's financiers even helped determine the outcome of the Russian–Japanese War by providing vast sums of money to help Japan—and thus to oppose the Russians, who were both clashing with US economic interests in Asia and deeply angering many Americans by conducting bloody campaigns against Russian Jews.

The economic foundation for this new empire was thus laid in the 1860 to 1890s era. The new empire's political structure strikingly appeared on this foundation between the 1890s and 1913. In 1895, Cubans rebelled against their Spanish rulers. Some $50 million of US investments in Cuba were endangered in the conflict. In April 1898, President William McKinley, a Republican, decided he had to go to war against Spain. Especially important in his thinking was a fear that the Cuban revolutionaries were winning their rebellion against Spain and, if triumphant, might threaten US property while ignoring American interests.

McKinley thus moved in the War of 1898 to drive Spain out of Cuba and, as well, to ensure that the Cuban revolutionaries would not control their country. Just as Jefferson had had severe doubts about allowing democracy in New Orleans during 1803, so McKinley doubted that democracy was best for American interests in Cuba in 1898. In what Secretary of State John Hay called 'a splendid little war', US forces defeated Spain in less than three months. Cuba and Puerto Rico were taken from Spain, along with the Philippine Islands in the south-west Pacific. The Philippines were a prize McKinley and Hay wanted because control of the Filipino ports for the US fleet would suddenly make the United States a force in Asia and its vast markets. McKinley also annexed the Hawaiian Islands in 1898, thus setting up another link between Americans and Pacific markets. Cuba finally received what was termed independence, but Americans controlled the country and took over a potentially superb naval base at Guantánamo.

In 1899–1900 Hay issued two historic 'open door' notes which defined the main principles for the new empire: China (then under attack by European and Japanese colonial powers) must remain whole, united, and under Chinese control, Hay proclaimed, so the entire country would be open to US trade and missionaries. His open door notes opposed colonialism and vigorously supported open foreign markets (in which the new American economic dominance could compete successfully against anyone). These two principles dominated US foreign policy into the twenty-first century.

In 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt helped Panamanians revolt successfully against Colombia, then seized a ten-mile-wide area through Panama. He began building an isthmian canal, which opened in 1914. Given its economic power and great battleship fleet (by that time one of the world's four largest), the United States could even act as a New World policeman. Indeed, Roosevelt actually announced in 1904–5 with his own corollary to the Monroe Doctrine that Americans would be the region's cop on the beat. The irrepressible Roosevelt, moreover, won the Nobel Peace Prize for mediating in 1905 a settlement between Russia and Japan after their war. The United States had become a major international power.

KEY POINTS

- The reunification of the country after the Civil War, and the industrial revolution which followed, turned the United States into the world's leading economic power by the early twentieth century.
- McKinley, Hay, and Roosevelt used that power to build both a great battleship fleet, which was the beginning of the modern US Navy that later dominated twentieth-century waterways, and the Panama Canal, which linked two of those great oceans.
- The objectives of the new empire after 1865 were the taking of strategic naval bases in the Caribbean and Pacific, while trying to ensure that such potentially great world markets as China, North Africa, and Latin America would not be colonized by Europeans or Japanese, but remain open to US goods.

Wilson's empire of ideology—and the bitter reaction, 1913–33

In 1917 the United States finally dropped its long-held refusal to become involved in European affairs. It joined the British and French in their war against Germany and Austria-Hungary. By this time, the world was not only gripped by war but by massive class revolution in such vital areas as Russia and China. President Woodrow Wilson tried to set out plans to deal with both the world war and the spreading revolutions. He and his allies won the conflict. But they could not agree on peace terms or stop the revolutions. During the 1920s Americans tried to build the foundations for peace, especially through their economic power. In 1929 that power collapsed in an economic panic which dragged down much of the world and helped create the Japanese and German militarism that took the world into another, much greater, world war.

The first great era of *globalization* (that is, the ever closer linking of the world's peoples through economic ties and technology) developed between the 1860s and 1914. Faster, oil-driven ships, then primitive aeroplanes, automobiles, and global telegraph lines shortened time and distance. By 1910, widely read authors predicted that because peoples were becoming so closely linked, major international wars were impossible.

In the summer of 1914 that conflict nevertheless began. The First World War broke out because of misunderstandings and miscalculations between the Allies (British, French, Russians, and Japanese) and the Central Powers (led by Germany and Austria-Hungary). Both sides had believed that civilized nations, like themselves, would never allow the mass killing that had become possible with modern arms in a full-scale war, so they felt safe in taking chances. Within months, thousands of lives were being snuffed out in a single day on the blood-drenched fields of France and Russia. Great Britain, France, and Germany, three of the world's wealthiest nations, suddenly had to mobilize such immense forces that, to their surprise, they were going bankrupt.

This brought the United States into the picture. President Woodrow Wilson (in office 1913–21) had demanded at the war's beginning that Americans remain neutral in thought and action. Meanwhile those Americans could profit by selling food and war supplies to both sides. As bankruptcy threatened the belligerents, however, they begged Wilson for help. He initially resisted. The president rightly feared becoming too closely tied economically to either side. But for three centuries Europe had been the most important market for Americans. As that market began to be unable to pay cash for US goods, and as economic depression threatened the United States, Wilson changed his mind. He allowed his nation's bankers to offer both sides dollars and credits so they could continue to purchase American products. The Allies, helped by long-time British ties to New York and Boston banks, borrowed $2.5 billion between 1915 and 1917. This was ten times the amount Germany and Austria-Hungary could obtain.

Wilson's decision to loan vast amounts of money was legal, but it turned out not to be neutral. As ships carrying US goods headed for British and French ports, Germany's submarines sank increasing numbers of those vessels and claimed hundreds of American lives. Wilson recognized the historic right of the British surface fleet, which controlled the oceans, to stop goods headed for the Central Powers. But no firm international law dealt with Germany's new weapon, underwater U-boats, so the president insisted that the submarines' attacks on US ships cease. The Germans complied until late 1916. In January 1917, however, they determined the American shipments to the Allies had to be stopped. The submarines again attacked US ships. In April 1917, the United States declared war on the Central Powers.

Americans now found themselves not only immersed in the bloodiest conflict in human history, but also in a world racked by revolution. The twentieth century was to be shaped by these revolutions. Americans grew to hate and oppose them. The first major upheaval had occurred in Mexico after 1911. As that outbreak threatened US lives and interests (especially oil holdings), Wilson several times sent in troops. Instead of taming the revolution, however, the president's military intervention helped make Mexicans both more radical and more anti-United States. At the same time, the great Chinese Revolution erupted. Preoccupied with Mexico, Europe, and the Caribbean, where outbreaks also threatened, Wilson could do relatively little in China.

When, however, the Russian Revolution of February–March 1917 exploded, the world changed for everyone, including Americans. Devastated and impoverished by fighting against Germany, the Russians overthrew their tsarist rulers, then rapidly moved to the left until in November 1917 a communist regime

led by Vladimir Lenin seized power. The Soviet leader moved to place private property under state control and to close religious sanctuaries—two acts which shocked the West. Lenin further stunned the Allies by pulling bankrupt Russia out of the fight against Germany. The new leader in Moscow also angered Wilson by threatening to spread communism throughout Europe. It was not an empty threat. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was fragmenting. Peoples in Africa and Asia ruled by British and French colonial officers began to demand independence. The entire globe seemed to be flying apart in 1917–18 and offering communism golden opportunities.

Wilson moved to control the revolutionary outbreak by demanding that the new nations be governed by American-style democracy, not by Leninist-style communism. In doing so, the president set in motion the US challenge to Russian communism—a challenge which characterized American–Russian relations for nearly the whole of the twentieth century. He was determined, as he said, 'to make the world safe for democracy'. Wilson vowed to end, 'once and forever', the centuries-long 'old order' of international affairs which had tried to maintain peace by what 'we used to call the "balance of power"—a thing in which the balance was determined by the sword' (Gardner 1984: 2).

Peaceful voting, the American way, was to replace bloody swords as the method for making changes. Europeans, including the British and French alongside whom Wilson fought, had little use for his version of democracy. They pointedly noted that in destroying or isolating the Indian tribes and Mexicans who had once populated large parts of North America, US officials had waged war—not conducted elections to see how the Indians and Mexicans might vote. Nor had the North decided the results of the Civil War by holding democratic voting.

The British and French knew, moreover, that elections in Africa and Asia would quickly end their own colonial empires. On this question, Wilson seemed at times to agree with his allies. A Virginia-born racist who as president presided over the segregation of African Americans in Washington, DC, Wilson doubted that many Asians and Africans, or some Latin Americans, could be trusted with democracy. The president even successfully opposed a Japanese effort to write a clause in the post-war peace agreements which would support racial equality.

Wilson, it became apparent, had never thought through these dangerously complex problems in regard to democracy. He and his associates in London and Paris won the First World War, but they divided and lost the peace. They could not figure out how to deal with (that is, remove) Lenin. In 1918, Wilson had actually joined with the British and French in sending military forces into Russia to try to weaken the communist regime. The intervention backfired as Russians supported Lenin's government against the foreign invasion.

The president's dreams of democracy also turned to nightmares at home. As the leader of the Democratic Party he made pivotal mistakes in 1918 which helped lead to a Republican victory in that year's congressional elections. Republican leaders had grave doubts about Wilson's peace plans, above all his famous proposal to create an international organization, the League of Nations, to maintain the post-war peace. The president, of course, saw the United States, under his leadership, as shaping and leading the new League. For nearly 120 years, however, Americans had steadfastly followed the advice of Washington and Jefferson to stay clear of international alliances. As they prepared to debate the post-war treaty and the League in 1919, Republican leaders in the US Senate decided to oppose Wilson's plans. The president fought back by beginning a gruelling speaking trip across the country. In Colorado, he was stricken by a massive stroke which made it nearly impossible for him to speak. The post-war debate was over. The United States would not join the League of Nations. Wilson's vague, often contradictory, plans for making the world safe for democracy disappeared—at least for a while.

Americans instead set out on their own to help economically reconstruct the war-torn world. In this way they could both make some money and help insure those areas against the seductive promises of communism. Their booming industrial, banking, and farm complexes made impossible any isolation from world markets.

When a military spending race to build battleships threatened to break out after the war, US officials called a conference in Washington for 1921–2. With imagination and bravado, Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes worked out a Five-Power Treaty with the British, French, Italians, and Japanese (the Russians of course were not invited), which sharply limited naval spending and even forced the signatories to destroy some of their ships. Hughes also seized the opportunity to work out a Nine-Power Treaty. This pact set out a peaceful approach to handling revolutionary China, including an agreed-upon open door approach to the vast Chinese markets. The 1921–2 Washington

Conference was the greatest American diplomatic success in the era between the two world wars.

US officials also enjoyed success in helping rebuild Europe. In 1923 the German economy had begun to spin out of control. The war had devastated it, and the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 had then forced Germany to pay billions of dollars in penalties for the war's destruction of property. France tried to grasp the opportunity by seizing territory long disputed between itself and the Germans. A crisis loomed, not least for US bankers and exporters. They long had understood that Germany was the most powerful industrial nation on the continent. If Germans were not economically healthy then all of Europe could sink into depression. The United States consequently quickly convened a conference in 1924 to deal with the crisis. Led by US vice-president Charles Dawes, a former Chicago banker, the conference worked out a solution. The so-called Dawes Plan proposed massive private loans from US banks to rebuild the German economy. France retreated from its land grab. Europe seemed finally to be at peace and safe from communist infections.

But appearances were deceiving. The economic centre of Europe, Germany, and the most powerful nation in Asia, Japan, heavily depended on US banks for needed capital. By 1928 and early 1929, however, the American economy began to stumble. The immediate cause was the New York Stock Exchange. Its stock prices had ridden the booming economy upward until in 1929 over-speculation and corrupt investment practices set in motion a sharp downward spiral of those prices. Capital began to disappear. Between October 1929 and mid-1931, the New York Exchange's stocks suffered the single greatest loss in history to that time. Some suddenly bankrupt investors chose to commit suicide. As the economy continued to sink in 1932–3, unemployment doubled during those years to an unheard-of number of 25 million. Little help came from most states or the federal government.

The two most important regional powers, Germany in Europe and Japan in Asia, had been supported (as in the 1924 Dawes Plan, noted above) by the dollar. When that currency began to weaken after 1929, so did German and Japanese ties to the United States. The civilian-based governments in Germany and Japan declined along with their economies. A militarily dominated regime emerged in Japan and then, in 1933, Adolf Hitler's Nazi party seized power in Germany.

The meaning of all this for US foreign policy was immediate—and catastrophic. The United States was unable either to help Tokyo or stop its military plans. The Japanese invaded Manchuria in September 1931. US president Herbert Hoover (in office 1929–33) refused to try to stop Japan. He was frightened of anything that might threaten the long US–Japanese friendship. He also preferred that if someone were going to exploit weakened, revolution-racked China, it would be Japan and not the neighbouring Soviet Union.

Moments occur in US history when events, usually catastrophic events such as the Civil War, the 1929–33 crash, or the 2001 attacks on New York City and Washington, should force Americans to rethink a world they thought they knew well. Such rethinking is incredibly difficult, especially if the years before the catastrophic events were marked by American successes, and in each of these instances (before the Civil War, the 1929–33 crash, or the 2001 attacks) that had indeed been the case. In 1861 Abraham Lincoln provided the rethinking by stopping centuries-long American expansion in order to kill the institution of slavery.

After the 1929 crash, no Lincoln appeared. President Herbert Hoover had considerable international experience, both as a successful engineer in Asian mining ventures and as a close adviser of Woodrow Wilson's between 1917 and 1920. But he was unable to deal with the failures of the nation's economic system. He largely stood immobile as prices collapsed and unemployment soared. Nor could Hoover fundamentally reconsider the foreign policies of the 1920s, which had rested on US economic power and cooperation with Japan and Germany. And so, along with the British and French, he did little as Japan invaded Manchuria and China and as Germany slid downwards into Nazism.

KEY POINTS

- The globe was shaken after 1911 not only by the First World War (1914–18), but by revolutions which struck, among others, Mexico, China, and Russia.
- The United States was swept into the First World War by its historic ties to the British and French, and by President Wilson's hope that he could help create a world safe for democracy, not revolution.
- Wilson and other victors failed to create this world at the Paris Peace Conference (1919), and Americans refused to join the League of Nations.
- Americans thus retained their freedom of action, but because of economic and security interests, they had to take the lead with the Washington Conference (1921–2)

to limit military spending, and with the Dawes Plan (1924) to rebuild Germany.

- The American economic system, however, sank into depression between 1929 and 1933, helping to trigger a global depression that created conditions for the emergence of a militarist regime in Japan and the Nazis in Germany.

The road from economic depression to the Cold War, 1933–45

In 1933, Hoover was replaced in the White House by New York Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt (in office 1933–45). The new president spent his first six years in office trying to end the economic depression at home. Conditions seemed slowly to improve, but for some months in 1938 the nation suddenly suffered one of the steepest economic downturns in its history. Within a year, however, Roosevelt's greatest concern was not the economy but the outbreak of the Second World War in Europe. Indeed, new military spending after 1939 finally lifted the nation out of the depression. In late 1941, the United States entered the conflict. The president spent the next four years not only winning the war, but trying, with much less success, to work out a post-war peace with the other two victors, Great Britain and the Soviet Union.

Roosevelt, much like Hoover, was an internationalist; he served as an assistant secretary of the Navy under Woodrow Wilson, and was a young vice-presidential nominee for the Democrats in the 1920 election who had strongly favoured joining the League of Nations. In dealing with the 1930s economic crisis, however, Roosevelt moved away from internationalism. His domestic, so-called New Deal, programmes tried to clean up and regulate the stock markets and banking system, while providing direct, immediate federal governmental help to out-of-work Americans. By 1936, the nation's economy had slightly improved, employment rose, and Roosevelt won a second term.

But he had accomplished this improvement at home with little rethinking of American foreign policy. Roosevelt believed he could best raise prices in the United States only through internal manipulation, not difficult international negotiations with trading partners. The president's isolationist foreign policies (that is, having maximum freedom of action, free of overseas political and also many economic commitments) were driven in part by his desire to have an unrestrained hand to revive, quickly, his nation's economy. His policies were also shaped by an isolationist Congress which wanted to concentrate on the domestic crises, not foreign developments. The desire of Americans to stay free of overseas commitments intensified as Hitler's Germany began a series of military aggressions which seized Austria and parts of Czechoslovakia in 1937–8, and as Japanese militarists renewed their invasion of China in 1937.

In 1938, the British and French weakly went along in an international conference at Munich to allow Hitler to seize parts of Czechoslovakia which contained large German populations. Roosevelt agreed with this policy of appeasement (allowing an aggressor—Hitler, in this case—to take territory in the hope it would satisfy the aggressor and bring about long-term peace). Hitler, however, absorbed the slice of territory granted by the British and French, and then, to the shock of Americans and the rest of the world, also seized the remainder of defenceless Czechoslovakia. 'Appeasement' and 'Munich' became dirty words in US and international politics, then and after 1945 (Record 2006: 8).

By the summer of 1939, Hitler was prepared to attack other parts of Europe. But he first wanted to neutralize his most important military opponent, the Soviet Union, which was by then headed by the dictator Josef Stalin. Throughout the 1933 to 1935 era, Stalin, deeply frightened of Hitler, had asked Roosevelt, along with British and French leaders, to cooperate in stopping the German aggression. The Westerners were not prepared to do so. They also doubted whether it was possible to work with a communist such as Stalin. In August 1939 the Soviet dictator stunned the West by making a deal with Hitler to stand aside while Germany attacked Poland. The Soviets and Germans then divided Poland between themselves. On the first day of September 1939, the Second World War began with that German invasion. The British and French declared war against Hitler, but the Americans remained neutral in the hope that they could somehow avoid the spreading flames.

By mid-1940 France and most of continental Europe had fallen under Nazi control. President Roosevelt, however, made only measured responses. London and other major British cities were being struck every night by Nazi planes in the so-called Battle of Britain, while a German invasion seemed imminent. The new

British leader, Winston Churchill, begged Roosevelt for help. The president responded with large amounts of economic assistance. Equally important, he secretly ordered US warships to track and if necessary sink any German submarines which threatened to interrupt the growing US trade with Great Britain.

But the greatest help for the British came, in a stunning surprise, from the Soviet Union. Hitler was growing tired of dividing up parts of Europe with Stalin and hoped to obtain badly needed petroleum by seizing Soviet oil fields. In June 1941 the Nazi leader launched the largest military operation in history with his invasion of the Soviet Union. His armies soon approached the Russian capital, Moscow, and the Soviet oil fields. Despite encountering considerable opposition, especially in Congress, Roosevelt quickly began sending large amounts of war matériel to Russia. Roosevelt and Churchill agreed that the Soviet dictator was not the person they would most like to work with, but Stalin was certainly to be favoured over Hitler. By autumn 1941, several encounters between American ships and Nazi submarines indicated it was only a matter of time before the United States would go to war, much as it had in 1917.

Instead, war surprisingly struck Americans from the opposite direction. Throughout 1940, Japan had moved into China and Southeast Asia in a quest for regional domination and, especially, badly needed oil fields. By mid-1941, as the Japanese seized control of French Indochina, US officials responded by shutting off American petroleum shipments to Japan. In a series of talks, no settlement could be reached between Japan and the United States in regard to the oil or—more importantly—China. Roosevelt refused to recognize Japanese domination of parts of China. Such recognition would have surrendered the historic US open door policy in that country.

Japan's military-dominated government secretly decided to launch a surprise attack on the American naval base in Hawaii, Pearl Harbor. Japanese officials hoped to destroy enough of the US Pacific fleet so Roosevelt, also faced with possible war in Europe, would be willing to meet most of Tokyo's demands in Asia. Japanese planes devastated Pearl Harbor on Sunday 7 December 1941. The attack stunned Americans, but instead of considering a settlement, as the Japanese hoped, Congress, at Roosevelt's request, declared war against Japan. On 11 December, Japan's sometime partner, Hitler, declared war against the United States.

The early months of American involvement in the Second World War were among the darkest in the nation's history. Japan seized a number of US bases in the Pacific, including the strategic Philippines, and threatened to invade Australia. US naval victories, especially in mid-1942 at the Midway Islands, finally began to turn the tide of battle. In Europe, Hitler's offensive continued until mid-1943 when Stalin's armies were able to stop the Nazi advance. Fighting the Second World War, the Soviets paid a horrible price of at least 25 to 30 million dead. Throughout 1942–3, Stalin desperately asked Roosevelt and Churchill to help by opening a second military front in France, and thus forcing Hitler to shift troops away from Russia.

The US and British leaders refused to open that second front until June 1944. Their refusal came in part from Roosevelt's belief that Anglo-American armies were not prepared for such an invasion of France, and in part from Churchill's determination to fight first in the Mediterranean, where the British Empire had major interests. Thus US and British forces invaded not France, but German-controlled North Africa in 1942 and then Italy. Stalin grew suspicious that his allies were hoping his armies would exhaust themselves fighting Hitler and thus not be in a position to threaten US and British plans after the war.

The United States was beyond question becoming the world's greatest power. British, Russian, Japanese, and western European industries and cities were largely reduced to smoking ashes between 1941 and 1945. But untouched US industrial production shot up by 90 per cent. Americans came to understand what this meant: they no longer needed to fear becoming politically involved with the world because now, they believed, they finally held the raw power to control and run that world. For example, in 1942, when Roosevelt announced a new United Nations organization which was to replace the failed League of Nations, most Americans immediately accepted the UN because they believed they (unlike Wilson with the League in 1919) would be able to control it. (And they did—until the 1960s and 1970s, when membership in the UN of many new African and Asian nations threatened US control. Then Americans cooled considerably toward the UN.)

A consensus emerged among US leaders during the conflict that they would hold post-war power. But for what purpose? What kind of world should Americans try to construct? Here Roosevelt and Truman encountered the haunting problem which, finally, doomed

Americans' post-war hopes and swept the nation into a forty-five-year Cold War—and beyond.

On the one hand, they were determined to construct an open, integrated post-war world in which trade could move freely. War-torn nations were to be rebuilt rapidly. There was to be no more high-tariff and other forms of economic warfare which had destroyed international relations in the 1930s and climaxed in the Second World War. Roosevelt first moved against his own ally, Great Britain. The British had tried to preserve their empire by setting up trade walls around it during the 1930s. In return for providing all-important US military help in 1941, Roosevelt asked Churchill to promise that after the war the British would remove those walls (and allow Americans, for example, to trade freely with such parts of the British Empire as India, Canada, and South Africa). The British leader complained bitterly, and tried to add reservations, but he had no choice except to give in to the Americans if he expected US help.

Washington officials followed this up in 1944 by establishing the economic side of the new United Nations: the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The World Bank was to provide international cooperation in investment to rebuild the post-war world. The IMF was to create international financial cooperation so the deadly economic wars between nations which had marked the 1930s could not be repeated. Because Americans controlled half the world's wealth in 1945, there was no doubt who would provide the financial resources for these two institutions—and thus control the institutions themselves.

Ominously, the Soviet Union refused to join the World Bank or the IMF in 1945–6. Stalin refused to allow any international organization controlled by the United States to examine Soviet records or try to shape the Russian economy. The dictator's refusal to cooperate with the US policy of an open economic world was also linked to the failure of the Russians and Americans to agree on how the post-war world should be rebuilt politically. Through three wartime summit conferences (at Tehran, Iran, in 1943, the Soviet city of Yalta in February 1945, and Potsdam, Germany, in July 1945), the US, British, and Soviet leaders failed to reach agreement on the crucial European question: how to rebuild a defeated Germany. Roosevelt at first was willing to make the Germans pay by stripping them of all industry (a position Stalin happily agreed with). But Roosevelt then changed his mind when he realized Europe could never be quickly rebuilt and kept open unless its long-time economic power centre, Germany, was rebuilt first. Stalin's armies finally took the decision out of Roosevelt's hands by reaching the German capital of Berlin ahead of US and British forces, and then holding on to eastern Germany. While the leaders debated, the Soviets stripped eastern Germany of all the resources they could ship back to Russia. Germany would remain divided for the next forty-five years.

The German question and other central post-war issues had not yet been fully decided on 12 April 1945, when Roosevelt suddenly died of a massive stroke. Roosevelt, however, had worked hard to stay on good terms with Stalin (recall his sending of massive US aid to the Soviets in mid-1941 even before the Americans entered the war), although the relationship was in decline during the months before Roosevelt's death. His successor, Vice-President Harry S. Truman, was a parochial Missouri politician who knew little about foreign policy, nor did Roosevelt ever try to help him understand the deteriorating relationship with the Russians in early 1945.

Understandably highly insecure personally, as well as unprepared, Truman quickly tried to show he was tough by demanding that the Soviets back down from their control of Poland and hold open elections in that country. The new president privately bragged that he had given the Russians 'the straight one-two to the jaw' (Sherwin 1975: 72; Stimson and Bundy 1949: 609). Stalin responded with a one-two of his own, which turned out to be more effective. He pointed out that he did not protest US and British policies in countries close to those two nations' interests (such as Italy, Belgium, France, and Mexico)—so Americans should understand that the Soviets had comparable interests in eastern Europe, through which, after all, the Germans had twice invaded Russia in just twenty-seven years. Stalin determined there would not be a third invasion.

Truman attended his first summit with Churchill and Stalin at Potsdam in July 1945. The president believed he had a secret weapon which would help him pressure Stalin to cooperate on American terms. That weapon, the atomic bomb, was first tested while Truman was in Potsdam. He told Stalin about the successful test. The Soviet leader seemed unimpressed. (He had learned a good deal about the bomb's development from Russian spies.) Despite the president's pressure, the Soviets refused to back down on Germany or eastern Europe.

Stalin did renew his earlier pledge to Roosevelt that the Russians would enter the war against Japan about 8 August. Truman, however, was by now little interested in having the Soviets involved in Japan. The United States dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945, instantly killing more than 80,000 Japanese. On 8 August, the Soviets declared war on Japan. The next day the United States dropped the second bomb on Nagasaki which killed more than 65,000 people. Within a week, Japan surrendered. Truman believed he had avoided the terrible bloodshed which would have resulted from an invasion of the Japanese home islands. The president rushed occupation teams into Japan so he would not have to share final control of the occupation with either the British or Soviets.

The struggle against Hitler and the Japanese militarists had ended in triumph. But a new war had erupted between the United States and Great Britain, on the one hand, and the Soviets on the other. The conflict was over the question of whether the world was to be open to trade, investment, and cultural influences (which the virtually untouched American society, enriched by the war, could command), or whether strategic areas of the globe, particularly central and eastern Europe, which had recently given birth to two world wars, were to be controlled and closed off by victorious Soviet armies. The Cold War had begun.

KEY POINTS

- During the 1930s the United States could neither solve its own economic depression nor cooperate with those nations concerned about the rise of Hitler in Germany or militarism in Japan.
- When the United States entered the war after being attacked by Japan in 1941, US officials began extensive planning for an open post-war world free of both British colonialism and Soviet occupation.
- Neither Roosevelt nor Truman, however, could find the means to force Stalin to retreat from eastern Germany and eastern Europe—two areas the Soviets believed were fundamental for assuring their own security.

Conclusion

In the early 1830s (that is, as Americans were convinced they were manifestly destined to build a North American continental empire), a shrewd French visitor, Alexis de Tocqueville, wrote a two-volume work, *Democracy in America*. It is perhaps the best analysis ever made of the nation's society—and its destiny. Tocqueville predicted that although both peoples were only beginning to be players on the international stage, Americans and Russians were each 'marked out by the will of heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe' (Tocqueville 1948 [1835], vol. i: 434). In the 1940s, Tocqueville's prediction of a hundred years before seemed to be coming true.

Americans had seldom doubted their own destiny. They began with thirteen colonies on the western rim of the Atlantic Ocean; less than eighty years after achieving independence, they had spread their system, which their leaders called an 'empire', from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The landed expansion was in part based on, and profited from, the institution of human slavery. In 1861, Lincoln stopped any further landed expansion which might benefit those who owned slaves. The result was the war which took more American lives than any other in the nation's history.

When the Civil War ended with the North's victory, a forcefully reunited nation proved so effective in exploiting and developing the continent that a new empire had to be developed after 1865. It was an empire of global markets, protected by naval bases in such places as Panama and the Philippine Islands, which could absorb the extraordinary production spewing out of American farms and factories. By 1900, the United States had become by many measurements the world's number one producer. Its interests swept it into two world wars. Faced in 1917–20 with a dangerously revolutionary world, Woodrow Wilson tried to organize that world by replacing radical revolution with his determination to 'make the world safe for democracy'. He failed, as did later American leaders who falsely assumed that political institutions arising out of centuries of American and British history could easily be translated into similar institutions in, say, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, whose history and traditions were vastly different.

Indeed, the American system itself broke down in 1928–9 and helped trigger a global depression which in turn gave birth to military regimes in Japan and Germany. By 1941, Franklin D. Roosevelt was concerned not with expanding democracy but with stopping Japanese and German expansion. The United States finally won the Second World War, but only with the help of the British and, especially, the Soviets. Of the 13 million Germans who perished in the war, Stalin's

armies killed more than 10 million, although at the cost of probably three times that number of Russian lives. The Soviet dictator determined to hold eastern Europe and part of Germany as a security area for the Soviet Union.

US officials could not accept such results of the war. They believed the world had to be open and developed economically along capitalist lines (thus the creation of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in 1944–5), while the globe was also being opened, decolonized, and slowly integrated politically (thus the creation of the United Nations between 1942 and 1945). When he issued his prophecy in the 1830s, Tocqueville had noted that although they were each destined to create an empire dominating half the globe, nevertheless the Russian and American 'starting point is different and their courses not the same' (Tocqueville 1948 [1835], vol. i: 433–4). The Frenchman was correct. The Americans' view of why they had become the world's greatest power in 1945, and why they now had to fight that Cold War, can only be understood by understanding how they had developed their continental empire and then their new empire over the previous 170 years. They were, and continue to be, the products of their own, long history.

QUESTIONS

1. What were the major characteristics of the first American 'empire'?
2. When and why did the first American 'empire' transform into a 'new empire'?
3. Jefferson is famous as a father of American democracy, so why did he deny democracy to the New Orleans region after he bought Louisiana in 1803?
4. Why did American expansion across the continent, which was supposedly blessed by 'manifest destiny', lead to the outbreak of the Civil War?
5. Why do the War of 1898 and its immediate results exemplify a new era, a 'new empire', in American history?
6. In 1918, much of the world (outside the Soviet Union) saw Woodrow Wilson as its greatest hope. Why, then, did Wilson fail to 'make the world safe for democracy' between 1918 and 1920?
7. Why was the US stock market crash of 1929 such a blow to the American foreign policies which had been forged, with considerable success, between 1921 and 1929?
8. With the world facing increased danger during the 1930s from Japanese and German military aggression, why did President Franklin D. Roosevelt follow isolationist foreign policies which offered little resistance to that aggression?
9. What were the major differences between the Soviet Union and the United States which developed when they were allies between 1941 and 1945 and led them into the post-1945 Cold War?
10. Why did the United States follow an 'open door' policy throughout much of its post-1890s foreign relations and, notably, in its planning during the Second World War for the post-war peace?
11. Given their history to 1945 of trying to expand democracy, should Americans make the expansion of democratic institutions throughout the world a central principle of their diplomacy?

FURTHER READING

Cohen, W. I. (2000), *The American Response to China*, 4th edn (New York: Columbia University Press).

This excellent survey of the entire US–China relationship includes useful reading guides.

Cole, W. (1983), *Roosevelt and the Isolationists, 1932-1945* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press).

Cole's volume is the best overall analysis of isolationism in the period and Franklin D. Roosevelt's relationship to it.

Gardner, L. C. (1984), *Safe for Democracy: The Anglo-American Response to Revolution, 1913-1923* (New York: Oxford University Press).

A superb, detailed analysis of Woodrow Wilson's response to the revolutions, this volume also provides important perspective by comparing Wilson's with the British response before, during, and after the First World War.

Hunt, M. H. (1987), *Ideology and American Foreign Policy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press).

In a splendid post-1780s overview, Hunt emphasizes the role of race and anti-revolutionary sentiment in the formulation of US foreign policies.

Iriye, A. (1993), *The Globalization of America, 1913-1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press).

A provocative overview, this volume includes most helpful bibliographical references.

LaFeber, W. (1993), *The American Search for Opportunity, 1865–1913* (New York: Cambridge University Press).

An overview emphasizing the American role in stimulating revolution, as well as opposing it, the book also has extensive lists for further reading.

Langley, L. (1990), *America and the Americas: The United States in the Western Hemisphere* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press).

A valuable survey, with most helpful guides for further reading, this book notes the Latin American developments as well as US policies toward the southern hemisphere.

Perkins, B. (1993), *From Sea to Sea, 1776-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press).

Written by a leading scholar of the era, this detailed overview has important interpretations as well as select lists of books and articles for further research.

Weinberg, A. K. (1935), *Manifest Destiny* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press).

A classic work of writing, scholarship, and interpretation, Weinberg's analysis is notably important for its questioning and, at times, its sarcasm.

Wilkins, M. (1970), *The Emergence of Multinational Enterprise: American Business Abroad from the Colonial Era to 1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).

This is the pioneering work on US financial expansion overseas and, although it is not identified as such, on the first great age of globalization between 1860 and 1914.

You can find a range of online resources to support your learning at www.oup.com/uk/cox_stokes3e/.

5

The economic rise of a superpower: from Washington to Trump

Michael Cox

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Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of how the United States moved from being a peripheral, predominantly agricultural country on the edge of a vast continent, to becoming the wealthiest economic power in the world (see Key quotes 5.1). To explain how this happened we first look at the economic rise of America before independence, and then at what part economic factors played in bringing about Great Britain and the American colonists. This is followed by a discussion of the extraordinary growth of the American economy between formal independence and the First World War—a period of massive material transformation possibly like no other in US history. The narrative then widens its gaze and assesses in detail the impact which global war had on transforming America from world economic power in 1914 to global superpower by 1945. We then continue by examining the dynamic growth of the US economy through the post-war period, but go on to ask: why had so many writers during the 1970s come

to believe that the US was already confronting economic decline? We then examine the political economy of the first truly post–Cold War American president, Bill Clinton. Here we discuss not only his successes but also how his economic policies—and those of his successor G. W. Bush—helped prepare the way for the great economic crash of 2008. This leads us to analyse the important economic reasons—there were others of course—why Donald Trump won the presidential race in November 2016. We then ask—again—whether or not the US is in economic decline. Finally, we try to assess the seriousness of the challenges facing the American economy as it moves forward through the twenty-first century.

KEY QUOTES 5.1

The power of the US lay in its wealth.

(*Burk* 1993)

Colony to independence

All countries like to tell the most flattering story about themselves. The United States has been no exception to this historic rule. Indeed, if anything, it has been especially prone to painting its own history in the most vivid and politically acceptable colours possible. In the case of its origins this has produced a story which has focused, very largely, on the idea of escape from the Old World by a hardy band of men and women who, facing religious persecution back home in Europe, made the momentous decision to set up 'plantations of religion' and shining spiritual cities on hills all along the eastern coast of North America. But many factors motivated those who made the perilous voyage from the Old World to the New from the early part of the seventeenth century onwards, the most crucial by far being the very natural desire to seek economic advancement in a land where the opportunities and the lure of free land seemed endless (see Key quotes 5.2).

KEY QUOTES 5.2: NEW ROUTES TO POWER

In the United States economic activities and success in the accumulation of wealth became the more common road to power and prestige than in older countries.

(*Chester* N. Wright—Wright 1941: 13)

Of course, for London, the original thirteen colonies existed for one reason and one reason alone: to increase the mother country's territory and wealth in its long drawn out war with its great enemy France. And it was to be the growing costs of that war (the British war debt is estimated to have been between £133m and £140m), and London's desire to put its relations with its colonies on a more formal economic footing, that set off a train of events which finally led to independence in 1776. Naturally enough, many of those fighting the British believed they were doing so in the name of some higher political principle. And many of course were. But the war itself did not begin with a political principle; in fact, most of those who later helped write the Constitution in 1787 had once viewed themselves as loyal members of the British Empire. Rather it began because of various British efforts to recoup the costs of its victorious but lengthy war against France by taxing Americans.

There were many specific taxes Britain sought to impose. Amongst the most egregious—at least according to the colonists—was the so-called Stamp Act, under the terms of which almost anything formally written or printed would have to be on special stamped paper for which a tax must be paid. There was, in addition, the English Navigation or Trade Acts which required goods to be shipped to and from America only in English ships. The Sugar Act then increased taxes on molasses and restricted certain export goods to Britain alone. Meanwhile the Currency Act prohibited the printing of money in the colonies. And finally there was the famous or infamous Tea Act of 1773, which led to the so-called Boston Tea Party.

But it was not just a series of what Americans regarded as unfair taxes that led to a war which few anticipated and which many on both sides did not at first want. Of equal importance was Britain's decision to isolate the area between the Allegheny Mountains and the Mississippi River from the rest of the colonies. By doing this, thousands of colonists desperate for land, and keen to exploit new opportunities, were deprived economically by being prevented from settling there or trading with native Americans. But this only obscured a much larger problem. Britain was content enough with what it already had territorially. The Americans, however, wanted much more. Herein lay the real difference. Indeed, by attempting to place limits on Americans out west, the British were, in effect, preventing further expansion across the continent as a whole. The dream of a new 'empire of liberty' was being put on hold—for the time being (Walton and Shepherd 1980).

KEY POINTS

- Economic factors, as much as if not more than religion, played a key role in bringing about the colonization of North America.
- Great Britain accumulated a large national debt in the Seven Years' War fought against France in North America between 1756 and 1763.
- The War of Independence may have been fought in the name of 'liberty' but was fuelled in large part by increasing American objections to having to pay taxes to Great Britain 'without representation'.

Birth of a nation

A successful war waged against the British (with a good deal of French aid) may have brought America independence. However, it still left open several critical questions about the form of government America would adopt and the economic relations to be established between the various states. But on one thing there was agreement: the so-called Revolution would not threaten the privileges of the wealthy, bring into question the institution of private property, or challenge the right of white people to own slaves. America may have fought for separation from Britain. But it had not done so in order to undermine the pre-existing order. The Liberal British prime minister, William Gladstone, seemed to understand this better than most. A great admirer of the American Constitution ('The most wonderful work ever struck by the brain and purpose of man' he once observed), he later remarked that what made the new United States so appealing was that it did not represent a fundamental break with the past, but was rather 'a vindication of liberties inherited and possessed'. America might have had a Bill of Rights and been a more equal society (at least amongst the white population). But the American revolution he observed had been a decidedly conservative affair.

Conservative or not, independence opened the door to the very thing many Americans felt was theirs by right: the lands to the west and south. Indeed, with the restraining hand of the British now removed, the way was now clear for what many Americans came to think of as their 'manifest destiny', but what more critical observers have seen as one of the greatest 'land grabs' in history, one which saw native Americans being expropriated; Spanish Mexico losing nearly half its territory; France selling what amounted to one-third of what was to become the United States for a measly $15 million; and Great Britain and Russia respectively handing over Oregon and Alaska. As one author has observed, what first began in Florida in 1817, when Jackson set about conquering native lands, was but a prelude to what subsequently unfolded in earnest right across the American continent in its entirety (Inskeep 2015).

But first the new state had to put its own economic house in order, a task which fell to Alexander Hamilton, in many ways the economic architect of the new America. Hamilton undertook a series of measures, which included proposals to encourage the development of American manufacturing sheltering behind an elaborate system of protective duties and tariffs. He also proposed the First National Bank to improve the nation's credit. Finally, in order to guarantee the stability and success of the new country, Hamilton insisted that all debts, totalling more than $60 million, needed to be repaid in full. Indeed, he believed establishing a national debt (which in effect meant taking over the debt of the different states) would help bring about unity by making all states feel indebted to the federal government (Murray 2007).

Hamilton has sometimes been called America's forgotten founder, and in economic terms he clearly was. Still, in spite of all his efforts, there was no hiding from the fact that in its early years America was in a seriously precarious position. Indeed, when one of Hamilton's main opponents—Thomas Jefferson—was inaugurated president in 1801, the United States was still an underdeveloped, largely agrarian (though relatively prosperous) country with a population of just over five million people. But this was not a situation likely to last for long, and as we shall see, over the next hundred years or so this once weak nation hugging the Atlantic shoreline did what all other rising powers have done in history: conquered territory once possessed by others, made war in a most ruthless fashion against all those who opposed its relentless economic expansion, and then justified all this in the name of civilization and material progress. Along the way, this most 'dangerous nation', to use Robert Kagan's telling description of America in the nineteenth century (Key quotes 5.3), bought, fought, and in many cases broke treaty after treaty with native Americans to become a

century later a country stretching 'from sea to shining sea' in control of a vast land mass (well over 3.5 million square miles), making it in territorial terms the third largest country in the world (Kagan 2006).

KEY QUOTES 5.3: EYES ON AMERICA

Most Americans today would be surprised to know that much of the world regarded America—even in its infancy—as a very dangerous nation.

(*Kagan* 2006)

Several factors account for this extraordinary material transformation. The most obvious was basic geography: the United States was not just big and lying in the right latitude (unlike Canada to the north), it also had abundant resources and vast quantities of cultivable land. Another factor was the security-rich environment in which it happened to find itself: in effect America was in the uniquely happy position of being 'surrounded' by two vast oceans to its east and west and by two weak neighbours to its north and south. Foreign capital and foreign trade also played a key role, as did the importation of foreign technologies which were then adapted to American conditions. Indeed, until the Second World War, most technologies came from abroad but were then applied on a massive scale in the American environment. Nor should we forget the role played by government. Some Americans might like to think that the nation's early economic success was the result of rugged individualism with the government playing little or no role. In truth, the role of government was crucial throughout the nineteenth century, whether protecting US industry from foreign competition or providing vast amounts of land to potential settlers: through the Homestead Acts of 1862 the government made available 270 million acres of public land—nearly 10 per cent of the total area of the US.

Finally, all this presupposed a steady supply of labour, a good percentage of which—though by no means all if one includes slaves and Asians—was coming from Europe. In 1850, for instance, immigrants (defined as 'foreign born') amounted to 2.2 million people, just under 10 per cent of a total American population of 23 million. By 1900 this figure had risen to 10.3 million in a population of 76 million. And by 1910 the figure had risen again to 13.5 million, about 15 per cent of a total US population of just over 90 million. Still, there was, as many employers complained at the time, always a labour shortage. But this too had its up-side, compelling industrialists to find ways of substituting machinery for 'hands', which in turn made US factories more efficient and the American manufacturing sector more productive than anything to be found in Europe—and although the gap closed for a while, by 1890 the US had once again pulled ahead of its nearest economic rivals across the Atlantic (Habakukk 1962).

KEY POINTS

- The American Revolution created a new republic with a Constitution and a Bill of Rights but did not challenge the established social and economic order.
- Alexander Hamilton was the principle economic architect of the new America and proposed, amongst other things, the creation of the First National Bank as well as a system of protective duties and tariffs to allow for the growth of US manufacturing.
- Several factors account for the economic rise of the United States in the nineteenth century including geography, the use of foreign technologies, a steady supply of labour (including slave labour), and government intervention.

From Civil War to the gilded age

The Civil War was the great cathartic moment in American history, pitting American against American in a bloody conflict that ultimately led to more deaths—as many from disease as on the battlefield—than in all of America's foreign wars thereafter. Nevertheless the war played a major economic role in fostering growth in the northern states. In fact, by the time the war had come to an end in 1865, not only had the North, which was already the main manufacturing hub of America, experienced increased production in nearly every sector of the economy, but also the path had now been cleared for the triumph of industrial and financial business in what soon came to be characterized by the American writer, Mark Twain, as the 'gilded age' (Snyder 1940).

It was a very different story in the South, of course. But its defeat should not obscure the absolutely vital role played by slavery in the growth of the American economy through the nineteenth century.

As the newer literature on slavery has shown, slavery as a system may have based in the South, but its economic consequences could be felt way beyond the plantation in the form of cotton, the most valuable traded commodity in America accounting for a major part of American economic output before the Civil War. Cotton was of course a major export, making vast fortunes for the industrialists of the North, not to mention the shipping companies and finance houses of the East. So important was it, in fact, that as late as 1840 cotton alone was worth more than all other exports combined. Little wonder it was called 'King Cotton' (Beckert and Rockman 2016). Nor did the end of the Civil War, and the abolition of slavery, reduce its economic importance. Indeed, it continued to play a crucial part in America's economic rise for the very simple reason that the federal government and northern capitalists were only too aware that the restoration of cotton production was critical, not only to the financial recovery of the nation after the Civil War but also to the country's prosperity overall. Indeed, by 1880, the US was exporting more cotton than it had twenty years earlier, while on the eve of the First World War, cotton still accounted for nearly one quarter of all US exports (Dattel 2008).

But even if cotton continued to play an important role, economic growth after the Civil War was not always smooth. There were serious disruptions along the way, including the 'panic' of 1873 and an even bigger crisis of 1893. There was great economic suffering too, not to mention some very bitter and often very bloody struggles between workers and employers, the latter in nearly all cases being supported by governments working hand in hand with employers determined to guarantee the rights of capital. But brutal and exploitative though the 'gilded age' might have been, the material results were there for all to see with real wages rising overall between 1860 and 1890 and the economy pushing ahead in nearly every economic field from the construction of the railways, the exploitation of oil and the manufacture of automobiles, through to the widespread manufacture and use of the telephone, the phonograph, and electric lights. In the process not only did this extraordinarily creative country (the US patent office issued 440,000 patents between 1860 and 1900) became extremely wealthy, so too did several great family dynasties including the Rockefellers (oil), the Mellons (finance and oil), the Carnegies (steel), the Vanderbilts (railways), and of course J. P. Morgan himself (finance and industry). Attacked by populist critics for robbing the people and building vast monopolies, these so-called robber barons came to symbolize the kind of America that was emerging in what one historian of the period has pointedly called the 'age of betrayal', in which the making of money invariably trumped the political hopes generated by the abolition of slavery and Lincoln's promise of establishing a 'government of the people, by the people, for the people' (Beatty 2008; see Key quotes 5.4).

KEY QUOTES 5.4: MONEY AND FREEDOM

An epoch which had gilded individual liberty so that if a man had money he was free in law and fact, and if he had not money he was free in law but not in fact.

(John Galsworthy, The Forsyte Saga—Galsworthy 1922)

Naturally enough, all this frantic economic activity on one side of the Atlantic did not go unnoticed on the other. For years, of course, influential thinkers in Europe—perhaps the most famous being Alexis de Tocqueville in his *Democracy in America*—had been fascinated with the very special character of America. But it was after the Civil War that Europeans really began to wonder what the rise of this new economic behemoth would mean for them. Many were impressed, especially the poor and the economically ambitious, who saw the United States as a land of genuine opportunity. However, many of the elites in Europe started to become distinctly worried about what writers at the time began to refer to regularly as the new 'American threat'. But perhaps the most interesting response of all was that which came from some on the British side. Indeed, one such Englishman, W. T. Steads (who later went down with the *Titanic* in 1912), probably summed up what many in the British establishment had come to accept by the beginning of the twentieth century: that America's rise was irresistible and the wisest strategy for Great Britain at least was to forge some kind of alliance with it. Britain, moreover, may have had little alternative, given the fact that the United States—'the greatest political, social, and commercial phenomenon of our times' according to Steads—might soon be running the world (Steads 1902). In 1914, Europe might have had larger armies and its policy-makers more foreign

policy experience. But the economic axis of the world was slowly but surely beginning to shift. With living standards now outstripping those of European countries, a population moving ever closer to the 100 million mark (Germany's in 1913 was around 80 million), a rising GDP (gross domestic product: 17 per cent of the world's total in 1913), and an economy which by the early 1890s had outstripped that of Great Britain, there seemed to be little doubt where the future lay. The European age was already coming to an end.

KEY POINTS

- The Civil War played a major economic role in fostering growth in the northern states followed by a period of unprecedented social and economic change in the 'gilded age'.
- Cotton production played a crucial part in America's continued economic rise, and accounted for nearly one quarter of US exports in the early 1900s.
- As the US became extremely wealthy, so too did several dynastic families —the so-called robber barons.
- By the 1890s Europeans, including the British, increasingly began to take note as the economic axis of the world started to shift towards the United States.

The Wilsonian moment

How and why a war in Europe finally helped transform the relationship between the Old World and the New is a story that has been told several times before. In part the immediate reason for the transformation was military. In effect, without direct American military intervention after 1917 the Allies might well have lost on the battlefield. But the deeper reason for the change in the balance of power was more obviously material, for as the war continued the British and the French very quickly discovered that they could not continue waging it effectively without sustained American aid. Indeed, as early as 1916 the UK was already spending 40 per cent of all its war expenditure in North America, buying more than a quarter of all of its engines for its new air fleet there, more than half of its shell casings, more than two-thirds of its grain, and much of its oil. To pay for this, Britain and France also had to float larger and larger bond issues to American buyers while transferring a substantial portion of its gold reserves to New York (by April 1917 the UK had sent something close to £305 million worth of gold across the Atlantic to help support its war effort).

Working as Britain's expert on all matters financial concerning the war, the economist John Maynard Keynes had an insider's view of the situation (Key quotes 5.5). His memos of the time are revealing and, though often very technical in character, make clear the degree to which all the Allies had become financially dependent on the United States. In one particular phrase he talked of the 'nervous centre of the allied financial system' now being 'as much in New York as in London'. It had not been like this at the very start of the war; but as the conflict continued and the costs escalated, the Allies found themselves facing a 'serious exchange crisis'—and there was no way of getting out of it, Keynes went on, except by borrowing increasingly large sums from the United States. Moreover, if the loans were to dry up, the Allies would be facing a crisis that could easily impact on the conduct of the war itself. The 'results would be plainly disastrous' Keynes noted. Not only would it give an 'enormous' boost to Germany: the 'whole financial fabric of the alliance' would 'collapse'. Of course such borrowing would leave the Allies massively in debt to the United States; but hopefully this problem could be addressed when the war had been won. Meanwhile, there was no alternative but to keep the funds flowing from the United States to the UK, and then for London to channel these funds to the other Allied combatants (Keynes 1971, pp. 245–51).

KEY QUOTES 5.5: STRAINED ALLIANCE

Unless the United States Government can meet in full our expenses in America ... the whole financial fabric of the alliance will collapse. This conclusion will be a matter not of months but of days.

(John Maynard Keynes, writing in 1917 Keynes 1971)

But while the Allies fought on, with ever depleting manpower and increasingly in debt to America, the United States prospered and boomed. Indeed, by 1915, the war was already providing the US economy with a massive boost as Allied requests for goods, guns, bullets, and food continued to flood in. In the process, American factories switched from civilian to military production while American farmers planted food and fibre to feed and clothe the combatants of Europe. This did not

change President Wilson's view of the war or his desire to keep the US out of it. The problem was that by 1916, the US economic commitment to Britain and France had grown so huge that some concluded that the US had acquired what amounted to a material stake in an Allied victory (Koistinen 1997). Whether or not it had, however, one thing was becoming increasingly obvious: America's economic fortunes were being seriously enhanced by the war (Frum 2014).

Thus, when war had erupted back in 1914, the US had been a debtor country with limited foreign investments competing with other European countries that still had considerable economic clout. Five years later, France lay in economic ruin, Germany was prostrate, and Britain had become a country living on American largesse. The United States meanwhile had become a creditor country, with New York fast on the way to replacing London as the axis around which the world's financial system would rotate. Nor were the American policymakers likely to let this newfound position of strength go unexploited—and none exploited it more effectively than that icon of liberalism Woodrow Wilson. America, he believed, had not only paid for victory but also turned the tide on the battlefield in 1918. Therefore, it would (and should) now take its place at the head of the table. President Wilson may not have been able to sell the peace to the politicians back home in 1920. But this perhaps mattered rather less than the more significant material fact that America emerged from the war in 1918 with an economy that had experienced a forty-four-month economic boom and upon which others had now come to depend (Tooze 2014). As Leon Trotsky pithily observed, as a result of one of the most destructive conflicts in history, there had been a decisive global shift away from Europe to America. The balance of power had for ever changed (Trotsky 1943: 120–6).

KEY POINTS

- The First World War provided the US economy with a massive boost as it responded to Allied requests for goods, guns, bullets, and food.
- By the end of the war in 1918 the US had experienced a forty-four-month economic boom and had gone from being a debtor country to a creditor country.
- Observers of very different ideological persuasion such as Keynes (a liberal) and Trotsky (a revolutionary) all agreed that the First World War tilted the balance of economic power away from Europe to the United States.

The coming of the American century

Brutal and costly wars are invariably followed by high hopes and unrealized dreams of a new world order. And so it was to be after 1918. But even if Wilson was unable to fulfil his liberal political dream of a society of states based on law, American politicians were still determined to ensure there was a smooth transition from war to peace. Indeed, with the war finished and a highly unsatisfactory peace signed, the United States returned to something like 'normal' and set about building an ever more robust economy at home while exploiting its now enhanced economic position to increase its influence abroad. And for at least a decade before 1929 the country looked to be booming, as the nation's wealth more than doubled while per capita income increased and corporate profits soared. Meanwhile, more and more Americans—including African Americans—began moving from rural areas to the cities, while increasing numbers of Americans overall began to participate in what might more generally be called a 'consumer society'. Significantly, the first commercial radio station opened in 1920, and by the end of the decade a majority of Americans visited film theatres. Perhaps, more significant still in terms of its economic impact, the number of registered automobile drivers rose exponentially during the 1920s from around 8 million in 1920 to 23 million by 1929, with the car industry employing hundreds of thousands of workers itself while giving a major boost to other industries as well such as oil, steel, and rubber. During the 1920s, the US also saw a massive expansion in road building, and through the 1920s about $1 billion a year was spent on the construction of a national network of highways. Little surprise, therefore, that most Americans—including the fiscally conservative President Coolidge, who fervently believed in the power of the free market—assumed the boom would never come to an end; the 'roaring twenties', as they came to be known in popular mythology, would keep on roaring.

However, the great boom that made the 1920s the economically dynamic but deeply conservative decade it was did not last; and following the Wall Street crash of 1929 the US rapidly moved from being the most dynamic economy in the world to becoming one of its most depressed. The impact was shattering: by 1933 the country's GDP had fallen to barely a half its 1929 level and industrial production by more than 50 per cent. Unemployment meanwhile reached levels which had never been experienced before. This was not just a normal downturn. It was an economic catastrophe which made

many Americans question what they had always been brought up to believe: that free enterprise was as American as the Model-T Ford and the Washington Monument. It also led millions of them to vote for the reformist Democrat, Franklin D. Roosevelt. He at least reassured Americans in their time of economic need that they had 'nothing to fear but fear itself'. He also set about dealing with the crisis by taking a series of what most economists of the time regarded as dangerously interventionist measures that would only upset the smooth operation of the market. Roosevelt always claimed he was trying to save capitalism from the capitalists by using the state as an instrument to revive the economy. But the capitalists certainly were not impressed. Moreover, try though he might, by the end of the decade unemployment still stood at around 14 per cent and looked set to rise again.

This is one of the many reasons why the coming of another global war proved to be so important economically for the United States. Americans may not have chosen to get involved in the war, in spite of Henry Luce's declaration in February 1941 that the Century was about to become 'American' (Key quotes 5.6). Yet even before the United States had become formally entangled, the war was already beginning to have a positive economic impact as President Roosevelt moved to shore up Britain's precarious position through what became known as 'Lend Lease'. This move certainly helped Great Britain in 1940 and 1941, but it also had a marked effect on the US economy. Once the US became completely involved after December 1941, the impact of total war on the US economy was little less than revolutionary: millions of previously unemployed men (over 8 million in all) joined the military; federal spending for the war escalated to something close to $350 billion; 17 million new civilian jobs were created; industrial productivity rose by 96 per cent; real weekly wages in manufacturing were 50 per cent higher in 1944 than they had been five years earlier; and entire new technologies and industries were created where none had existed before (Winkler 2012).

KEY QUOTES 5.6: HENRY LUCE

Throughout the 17th century and the 18th century and the 19th century, this continent teemed with manifold projects and magnificent purposes. Above them all and weaving them all together into the most exciting flag of all the world and of all history was the triumphal purpose of freedom. It is in this spirit that all of us are called, each to his own measure of capacity, and each in the widest horizon of his vision, to create the first great American Century.

(*Luce* 1941)

Naturally, when the war finally came to an end and with it high levels of federal spending, many started to worry that the United States would experience a major downturn. Indeed, a number of economists were convinced this would happen, including the celebrated Paul Samuelson. Samuelson in fact predicted that a dramatic drop in federal defence spending and the reintegration of 10 million servicemen into the civilian labour force following the end of the Second World War would usher in what he feared might be 'the greatest period of unemployment and industrial dislocation which any economy has ever faced' (Barro and de Rugy 2013). As we shall see, his gloomy warning turned out not to be true. But it does remind us of how significant the war had become in purely economic terms. As one historian of the US war economy has noted, the war not only brought a 'difficult decade' (the 1930s) to an end; it also precipitated an 'enormous resurgence' in economic activity that gave America's economic system 'the boost it needed' to move on (Winkler 2012, pp. 1–2).

KEY POINTS

- In the period between 1919 and 1929 the US economy boomed, with the nation's wealth more than doubling, per capita income increasing, and corporate profits soaring.
- Following the Wall Street crash of 1929 the US rapidly moved from being the most dynamic economy in the world to becoming one of its most depressed.
- The crash led millions of Americans to vote for the reformist Democrat, Franklin D. Roosevelt.
- Even before the US became formally involved in the Second World War, the 'Lend Lease' with Britain in 1940 and 1941 had a marked effect of the US economy.
- The impact of the Second World War on the US economy was little less than revolutionary.
- While some economists were convinced that the end of the war would see a return of the Depression, this turned out not to be the case.

Restoring world capitalism

But if war (once again) was experienced as boom in the United States, this was hardly the case in other parts of the world (Key quotes 5.7). Indeed, elsewhere, the post-war situation was dire at best and desperate at worst. Britain, for example, was effectively bankrupt, while a good deal of mainland Europe had been turned into rubble. As a result, the economic gap between the US and all other countries, including Europe, had become huge—so much so that by 1947 the US accounted for around 55 per cent of all the global production in food and energy, while generating more energy and electricity and producing more cement, coal, and steel and than the rest of the world combined. In reality, so far ahead was the United States that many wondered how it would be able to have any 'normal' economic relations with other states in what remained of the international economy (United Nations 1948).

KEY QUOTES 5.7: EFFECTS OF WAR

In the present world economic situation the fact looms large that the economic potential of the United States of America has enormously increased during the war, while that of many other important production centres has considerably diminished.

(United Nations Economic Report, January 1948—United Nations 1948: 3)

But before the United States could address this particular problem (referred to at the time as the 'dollar gap'), it was necessary for Americans to understand why the world had been plunged into disaster in the first place. Here policy-makers displayed rare historical insight by thinking seriously about what had gone wrong before, and what would have to be done now to restore economic order to the world. It was generally agreed that major diplomatic mistakes had been made at the peace conference in 1919; it had certainly not helped when the Senate rejected US membership of the League of Nations in the same year. But the biggest problem of all, many American policy-makers concluded, was less political than economic and related to the failure of the United States to act in a way that linked its own economic interests with prosperity in the rest of the world. Indeed, the US, it was now accepted, had made matters much worse between the wars—first by insisting that the Allies try and pay back all the money owed as a result of the First World War; then by lurching into a financial crisis in 1929 that spilled over into Europe; and finally by erecting ever higher protective barriers in a desperate attempt to shore up jobs at home. The result was catastrophic as the world fell apart economically before plunging into yet another war.

But lessons were learned in what turned out to be an extraordinarily creative period of intense institution-building beginning in 1944 at Bretton Woods in New Hampshire. Here the US set about creating the foundation for a functioning international economy. Underpinning this new order was the American dollar, which from now on would act as the reserve currency for the rest of world. Regulating it would be a series of interlocking bodies including the International Monetary Fund (IMF) plus the World Bank, whose initial aim was to help rebuild European countries devastated by the Second World War. 1947 also saw the foundation of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)—later the World Trade Organization (WTO)—whose primary role was to reduce barriers to trade and facilitate the re-opening of the international economy after a thirty-year period during which world trade had dropped calamitously (Ikenberry 2001).

But crucial though this architecture turned out to be, it would have made little difference without an economy which by 1950 accounted for nearly one-third of the world's GDP and about half of its industrial output. Nor would the world have experienced the economic recovery it did if the United States had not been economically buoyant itself. But buoyant it certainly was to become, with an average growth rate of 3 to 4 per cent every year for nearly twenty-five years after 1947, leading to an exponential rise in US GDP from about $200 billion in 1946 to $1 trillion by 1970. Over the same period, average living standards increased by over 2 per cent year on year, unemployment remained relatively low, and Americans started doing what people often do when the economic times are good: they began reproducing in large numbers, bringing the population up from around 160 to 200 million.

This extraordinary performance was brought about in part by a massive backlog of savings, resulting from the wartime combination of high wages and scarcity of consumer goods, and in part by war time research and development (R&D), which laid

the foundations for several key industries including electronics, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, aeronautics, and atomic energy. However, it was not just savings alone or the legacy of the Second World War that drove post-war growth. So too did low commodity prices, especially the low price of gas and oil. Increased federal spending made a big difference as well (the Highway Act of 1956, for example, provided $26 billion, the largest public works in US history). In addition, the US experienced yet another consumer boom that saw a massive increase in home ownership, an enormous rise in the production and purchase of consumer durables (by 1960 three-quarters of all families owned at least one TV set), and of course a major expansion in the production and sale of American motor vehicles. No doubt the US was helped too because there was so little serious foreign competition in the 1950s and 1960s.

But all this has to be situated in a wider strategic environment and in the context of America's ongoing Cold War with its main communist rivals—the USSR and China: an intense global struggle which did not just shape US foreign policy, but also had a significant impact on the American economy. Indeed, as many writers have noted, the Cold War performed what might be loosely described as an important, perhaps crucial, economic function that not only made it possible for the United States to disburse billions of dollars of aid to allies abroad, but also provided successive American governments with a politically acceptable way of justifying high government spending at home. Cold War expenditure alone did not cause the post-war boom, but clearly this spending—on average about $150 billion per year between 1951 and 1971 and 30 per cent of the federal budget—made a big difference to the American economy in general and to a number of its key corporations in particular, most notably Lockheed, General Electric, General Dynamics, and ATT&T. In fact, three quarters of all R&D in these and other corporations relied increasingly on spending by the Department of Defense (DoD). Indeed, by 1960 spending by the DoD accounted for one-third of all industrial R&D, while defence contractors taken together were employing about 25 per cent of all of the country's electrical engineers and fully one-third of all its physicists and mathematicians. Even university research was shaped by the Cold War. Spending here may have only represented a relatively minor item in the DoD budget. Nevertheless, it was contracts with universities like MIT and Stanford that provided most of the basic research for the defence industry (Leslie 1997).

The growth of this intimate partnership between various military agencies, high-technology companies and some universities could not go unnoticed, of course. Nor was it without its critics, both on the left who viewed the military as a threat to world peace, and on the fiscally conservative right who simply did not like federal spending of any sort. But perhaps the most famous critic of all was Dwight D. Eisenhower—a two-term US president between 1954 and 1960 with impeccable military credentials, who in his farewell speech delivered in early 1961 made the strongest case possible against what he termed the 'military industrial complex'. Eisenhower agreed that given the burdens thrust upon it by the great conflicts of the twentieth century, the United States had to be militarily strong. But with the coming of the Cold War the US had, in effect, created an 'immense military establishment and a large arms industry' whose 'total influence—economic, political, even spiritual'—was now 'felt in every city, every State house, every office' of the federal government. This, he observed, was something quite 'new in the American experience'. Eisenhower even made his own calculations, suggesting that all told the military establishment now employed 'three and a half million men and women directly' while the US government spent more on it than the net income of all United States corporations. It was hardly surprising therefore that it had acquired what he felt was 'unwarranted influence' in the 'councils of government', and something should be done to reduce this influence—partly because it posed a grave danger to American democracy and partly because such a high level of federal spending going on the military was bound in his view to distort the economy (*Public Papers of the Presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower 1960–61*, 1961: 1035–40).

Eisenhower's warning did not go completely unheeded, though at the time it certainly did not get the attention it probably deserved. Nor it did not appear to have a major impact on defence spending. Indeed, when Eisenhower's successor, John F. Kennedy, took office—claiming incidentally that the USSR was forging ahead militarily—he raised spending on the military by 11 per cent between 1960 and 1962. Admittedly, it then declined for a while until 1965, but then again rose by more than one-third to around $210 billion (it had been about $150 billion when Eisenhower had made his speech) as the United States became

more deeply involved fighting what turned out to be a costly and ultimately unwinnable war in Vietnam—a war which not only led to major political upheavals in the US by the late 1960s, but as we shall see, also set in train a series of events which led to the even deeper economic crisis which followed in the 1970s.

KEY POINTS

- Post–Second World War policy-makers attempted to learn from past policy mistakes and created new economic institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT, 1947), all designed to rebuild a functioning global economy.
- America's extraordinary economic performance after the war was due to the building of a more robust economy during the Second World War, high levels of savings, low commodity prices, federal spending, a consumer boom, and a lack of serious foreign competition.
- During the Cold War the US developed what President Eisenhower later called a military industrial complex accounting on average for 10 per cent of US GDP.

Pax Americana in crisis?

No boom lasts forever, but in the case of the United States it came to a shuddering halt in 1973 when the economy went into a recession from which it only recovered (and then only barely) two years later (Key quotes 5.8). The causes of the crisis were multiple—some as we have suggested arising from the funding the war in Vietnam (while having to increase spending on welfare), others from the more general costs of being the world's leading and only superpower, and yet one another from the decision by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to increase the price of its oil sold on the world market. Whatever the reasons, the US began to experience something for which there was no economic precedent: namely, a rapid slowdown in the rate of growth but at the same time a fast increase in the level of inflation to something close to 15 per cent. This would have been problematic enough. But all this was taking place in a world where other economies (Germany and Japan most obviously) were beginning to compete more effectively with the United States. The US then tried to respond to these new challenges, and in 1971 did so in the most dramatic fashion possible when Nixon effectively undermined the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates by allowing the dollar to float. This, it was assumed, would make the US more competitive while inducing its major trading partners to adjust the value of their currencies upward and the level of their trade barriers downward so as to allow for more imports from the United States. And in the short term the measures had some positive consequences for America's economic position. But the wider result was to send the message that the United States could no longer underwrite the international order in the way it had once done in the days after the Second World War when it really could (to paraphrase John F. Kennedy) pay any price and make any sacrifice and go anywhere to defend the cause of freedom. To many it looked like the end of *Pax Americana*.

KEY QUOTES 5.8: RECESSION

Already racked by a devastating double-digit inflation, the nation is now also plunging deeper into a recession that seems sure to be the longest and could be the most severe since World War II.

(*Time Magazine* 1974)

Not surprisingly, this shifting environment caused many analysts to ask a question which would have been unimaginable before: namely, whether the US was, for the first time in its history, facing the possibility of decline. To many it certainly appeared as if the sun was setting on the empire. Consequently, a whole new literature began to appear explaining how and why the United States was in such trouble, and what might happen to the world if the US was becoming (or had already become, in the words of one writer) 'an ordinary country' (Rosecrance 1976). The crisis also occasioned something of a change in the study of world politics. While the US rode high during the 1950s and 1960s the only question worth debating, it seemed, was not how powerful was the US—that was a given—but rather how best could it use its enormous power to deal with the communist threat? Now, in more straitened times, the question being asked by policy-makers and public intellectuals was not how could the US keep on containing the enemy, but rather how could it continue to maintain anything resembling 'hegemony' when the situation at home, and in the world more generally, looked to be so dire?

But not everybody was convinced that the American age had come to an end. One who was not was the formidable political economist, Susan Strange. America faced many problems, she admitted. Its leaders were incompetent. But this was not the same thing as decline. In fact, the decline thesis, she believed, was just a 'myth' and a 'dangerous and persistent' one, at that, if Americans actually came to think it was true. However, in her view, it was clearly untrue. With the dollar still reigning supreme, American corporations riding high, and a series of powerful and dependent allies all round the world, the US still retained formidable 'structural power' that it would be folly for friends and enemies of the US to ignore (Strange 1988).

The Yale political scientist, Bruce Russett, could not have agreed more. However, he shifted the debate away from the empirical towards the definitional, insisting that before we could judge whether or not decline was happening, we would first need to define our terms. He then went on to distinguish between what he termed 'power base' and 'power as control over outcomes'. If power was defined in terms of the former, then there was something to be said for the view that the US did not possess quite as much economic power as it had back in 1945. However, if power was measured in terms of delivering public goods and outcomes that benefited the international system as a whole, the US remained as central as ever. Furthermore, there were very many good reasons for it to remain central. After all, if, as some believed, the United States was in decline, then given the important economic role it played in the wider world, there was every chance that as its power fell away, the world *sans* a hegemon could very easily become a less orderly place. However, if the US was still capable of underwriting the system—as both Strange and Russett seemed to feel it was—there was every possibility the system and all the benefits that came with it measured in terms of prosperity, increased trade, improving living standards, and the like, might endure (Russett 1985).

In the end, however, it took an historian of note to finally set the proverbial cat among the pigeons: and it was with the publication of Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* in 1987 that the debate shifted from the corridors of academia to the public arena. Carefully written and based on impeccable historical research, Kennedy's message to his readers could not have been clearer: the United States was at a tipping point, or, to use his phrase, facing 'imperial overstretch' in which it was—like previous great powers—diverting more and more of its resources to maintaining its global position in the world. This was not sustainable over the longer term. Nor was this the only problem it was facing. Undermined at home by deficits and a declining industrial base, and threatened abroad by economic competitors like Japan—Kennedy even predicted that Japan might soon become number one—the United States, he felt, could no longer afford to remain a superpower. Its best days were behind it (Kennedy 1987).

Kennedy's massive book not only proved to be a publishing sensation. It also provoked a furore in the United States itself; and for several very obvious reasons. One quite clearly was that Kennedy looked to be questioning something to which Americans had become ideologically attached—the notion that America was exceptional in every respect, and that while all other great powers might have declined in the past this was not something about to happen to the United States of America. Moreover, published as it was when Reagan was optimistically proclaiming that it was 'morning in America', his book also offended Reagan's many conservative supporters by providing what looked like ammunition to all those critical of his presidency.

It did not take long for Kennedy's critics to respond. Some were almost incandescent, including a former presidential adviser, Walt Rostow, who attacked Kennedy for thinking that because all great powers had declined before this would be America's fate too (Rostow 1988). For Rostow, this was nonsense. Kennedy, he went on, was merely arguing by analogy. Another writer was perhaps even less generous. Kennedy had, he agreed, been right about the decline of other great powers, including the USSR, but he had been plainly wrong about the United States (Nau 2001). Even the more considered rebuke by liberal international relations theorist Joseph Nye still took Kennedy to task. America, Nye argued, with its combination of both hard power and 'soft power' (this is where the term was first used), was still 'bound to lead' (Nye 1991). And so the debate went on, proving that Kennedy had clearly touched a very raw nerve by having the historical gall to suggest to Americans that the United States was not the exception to the great power rule of decline.

KEY POINTS

- The US's economic crisis of the 1970s can be traced back to multiple sources, including the war in Vietnam, the costs overall of being the world's superpower, rising spending on the welfare state, and the fourfold increase in the price of imported oil.
- During this period other economies (like Germany and Japan) were also beginning to compete more effectively.
- In 1971 Nixon undermined the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates by allowing the dollar to float—in the short term the measure had positive consequences and improved America's competitive position, but it also highlighted that the US could no longer underwrite the international order as it had done in the period following the Second World War.
- During the 1970s and 1980s a number of analysts—the most famous being Paul Kennedy in 1987—began to ask whether the US was facing the possibility of decline: many writers, however, from Susan Strange and Bruce Russett to Walt Rostow, Henry Nau, and Joseph Nye contested this view.

The United States in an era of globalization

In the end, the great debate between Kennedy and his various interpreters—critics and supporters alike—was decided less by the power of argument than the march of events. And it was to be a series of world-defining events, beginning with the end of the Cold War in 1989 followed two years later by the end of the Soviet Union itself, that finally put paid to the (disputed) notion that the United States was in serious long-term trouble. When the bottom fell out of the Japanese financial system in 1990, and a few months later the United States organized a military coalition that defeated the largest army in the Arab world in Iraq, it only seemed to prove that those, like Kennedy, who had for some time been speculating that the United States was on the way down simply did not understand the special character of the United States.

But one president who claimed that he did understand the US was William Jefferson Clinton, who became president in 1992. Economically literate and intellectually innovative, Clinton viewed the world less as a place of military threat and more as an arena of economic possibility. One of a new group of new 'third way' modernizing Democrats, he was especially keen to develop a foreign policy for the United States in a rapidly changing world increasingly defined by greater economic openness: 'globalization' by any other name (Key quotes 5.9). This world, he insisted, presented the US with a rare chance of enhancing its own economic position while creating highly paid jobs for ordinary American workers. But America, he went on, would have to compete in the world economy, not retreat from it; and if it could do so successfully—and there was no reason it could not, given its enormous economic capabilities—this would not only make America richer but also lay the material foundation for something close to Clinton's political heart: a more open and more democratic world. This world, he felt, would not only be more peaceful (democracies, it was argued, never went to war with each other) but could also be managed by the US at much reduced cost (Cox, Ikenberry, and Inoguchi 2000).

KEY QUOTES 5.9: GLOBALIZATION

Globalization is not something we can hold off or turn off. It is the economic equivalent of a force of nature—like wind or water.

(Clinton 2000)

Clinton's grand liberal vision of an America competing in, and enthusiastically engaging with, the new globalizing economy was certainly an ambitious one. It was also a vision which struck a chord at home among many ordinary Americans who may have had little interest in international affairs, but who did sense that Clinton's laser-like focus on economics might actually work to their material advantage. Indeed, the more he talked economics the more they connected with him, and the more he won their support in spite of the various scandals that continued to plague his presidency (Cox 1995).

But not everybody was as enthusiastic about globalization as Clinton. Many, for instance, baulked when it came supporting a new free trade agreement with Mexico and Canada, the North American Free Trade Agreement or NAFTA. This, they feared, could very

easily lead to further 'outsourcing' as more and more American jobs went abroad. Nor were some as keen as Clinton when it came to China. 'Coddling dictators' was precisely what Clinton said he would not do before he got elected. But once in office this is precisely what he did. In fact, engaging China became almost an *idée fixe* with Clinton. Europe may have remained America's most important partner. But China, he often remarked, was a country of over one billion people with vast economic potential, and at some point in the not too distant future would become a major economic actor in its right. America therefore had to get in on the 'ground floor'. This would not just be in America's economic interest; by actively engaging Beijing the US might also be able to socialize China into becoming a stakeholder in the kind of liberal order America had been seeking to uphold ever since the end of the Second World War (Ikenberry 2001).

The Clinton years were therefore especially important and dynamic ones in the economic history of the United States. Yet he left a legacy which was not quite as positive as his apologists at the time, and since, have claimed. He may have created millions of jobs at home while overseeing a measurable improvement in America's economic position abroad. On the other hand, his policies—as we shall later see—sowed the seeds of a number of problems that finally came home to roost a few years later. Clinton moreover did little or nothing to regulate an increasingly out of control Wall Street. Indeed, so out of control had it become that some notable figures, including the hugely successful financier George Soros, argued that what was being created in the 1990s was a very large speculative bubble which might, one day, burst with catastrophic consequences for the economy as a whole (Soros 2003).

But for a time, few seemed prepared to listen to the doomsters. Unemployment was dropping like a stone (by 2000 it had fallen to 3.9 per cent from 7 per cent eight years earlier); growth was hitting record levels at about 4.5 per cent every year; and the US stock market could not stop rising, going up from 5715 in January 1992 when Clinton assumed office to 13,709 when he left. Clinton even managed to sort out those persistent deficits: when he took over in 1992, the US was still in the red, with an annual budget deficit of just under $300 billion. But by the time he left, it was in the black with a surplus of well over $200 billion. Clinton, it seems, had achieved the economically impossible, eliminating a problem which many had been insisting for years was the one thing undermining America's great power position in the world. America for the first time in years had become solvent. Another American Century looked to be beckoning (Cox 2001).

KEY POINTS

- Clinton argued that globalization was irreversible and that the US had only one choice: to compete, not retreat in the new globalizing economy.
- The Clinton years saw increased employment and growth and an elimination of the budget deficit.
- Clinton saw both political and economic benefits of the US remaining engaged with China.
- Clinton's economic achievements, which made him popular at home and abroad, may however haver stored up a number of economic problems—such as an unregulated financial sector—which contributed over the longer term to the 2008 crisis.

From Bush to crash

Clinton's successor, George W. Bush, knew very little about economics and perhaps even less about the importance of deficits. In fact, during his two terms in office the deficit quite literally exploded—partly the result of his tax breaks for the rich and partly the consequence of a massive rise in federal spending, much (but by no means all) of it going on defence. As Bush's fiscally more conservative critics pointed out, there was something deeply ironic about this. Here, after all, was Bush—the right-winger—presiding over an 83 per cent increase in overall federal spending, while Clinton—the hated liberal—had managed to bring the deficit down by being fiscally responsible (Mitchell 2011).

Bush, though, either did not care or, more likely, simply did not think it was important (Edwards 2009). Others did, including Nobel-Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz. Profits may have been rising and unemployment going down, but Stiglitz—among many others—warned that one day a price would have to be paid (Stiglitz 2007). Nouriel Roubini, another economist (later known as Dr Doom), could not have agreed more. Indeed, at an IMF gathering in 2006, he told his audience that if things went on as they were, the whole economic system could easily come crashing down. A profound crisis was 'brewing', he warned, and unless something was done, and done quickly, the country

would soon be facing 'a once-in-a-lifetime housing bust, an oil shock, sharply declining consumer confidence and, ultimately, a deep recession'. According to one report, the assembled members of this no doubt distinguished audience 'seemed skeptical, even dismissive' of what Roubini had to say (Mihmaug 2008).

In the end, the pessimists were proven right. The crash which most orthodox economists said could not happen did happen. Moreover, not only did it hit the the United States but it nearly brought the whole world economy down too. Indeed, so critical was the situation that when Barack Obama formally entered the presidential office (and he won the 2008 election largely because of the crisis), he told his financial advisers that he really only had one priority, and that was to prevent another 1930s-style depression from occurring 'on his watch'. The people around him agreed, including the chair of the Federal Reserve, Ben Bernanke. One of America's leading economic historians who had, coincidentally, written in his academic days on the deeper causes of the collapse of the US economy after the Wall Street crash of 1929, Bernanke was in no doubt about the scale of the economic threat (Key quotes 5.10). A few years later he even confessed that things had been a good deal worse than he had at first thought. In fact, when later asked why he thought it had been essential for the government to rescue the financial sector with massive bailouts, he replied, quite bluntly, that not doing so could very easily have resulted in a global financial and economic meltdown, with catastrophic implications for production, income, and jobs (Worstall 2014).

KEY QUOTES 5.10: BEN BERNANKE

September and October 2008 was the worst financial crisis in global history.

(Ben Bernanke, chair of the Federal Reserve: document filed 22 August 2009 with US Court of Federal Claims)

But what caused this crisis to happen? Many culprits have been found guilty in the dock of history, including the growing economic importance of finance, George W. Bush's huge spending programmes, too many mortgages being sold to those who could not afford them, widespread declines in underwriting standards, breakdowns in lending oversight by investors and rating agencies, increased reliance on complex and opaque credit instruments that proved fragile under stress, a failure to save, imbalances in the new globalized world economy, and most interesting of all, perhaps, a basic belief that such a crash simply could not happen. As Bernanke later oberved, nearly everybody discounted risk and did so, presumaby, because they felt the market simply could not fail. Why should it? After all, market capitalism had seen off its ideological enemy in the form of socialist planning. It had then gone on to deliver low inflation and a significant decline in macroeconomic volatility. Hence, there was every reason to think the market was bound to go on doing what it had been doing so well before. Most professional economists appeared to agree. Taking their cue from the so-called 'efficient market hypothesis', they felt that there was simply no way that something like 2008 could ever happen. Theoretically it could not happen—until of course it did (Bernanke 2015).

But if there is little consensus about the causes of the crash, there is a good deal about its consequences. Certainly, in the years immediately following 2008, the situation in the United States looked dire with over 8 million Americans losing their jobs, stocks plunging, consumer demand drying up, and a massive loss in real estate wealth of about $3.4 trillion by the end of 2009. Overall, the crash probably cost the average American household the equivalent of between $50,000 to $120,000 between 2008 and 2013, and the US somewhere close to about a year's economic activity, around $14 trillion. Clearly this was no ordinary downturn but an economic tsunami. Moreover, if the federal government had not stepped in with a massive bailout, for which the taxpayer then paid, the situation would have been even worse. In fact according to one calculation, without active intervention by the government the downturn would have continued well into 2011 with GDP slumping by as much as 11 per cent and unemployment rising to nearly 17 per cent—with possibly worse to follow (Blinder and Zandi 2015).

Given the importance of the United States in the larger international economy it was inevitable that a downturn as severe as that of 2008 would hit the rest of the world. And so it turned out to be. Some regions and countries were especially hard hit, including those in Central Europe, the less competitive economies in the Eurozone (Greece most visibly), as well as emerging economies, whose combined GDP was about $1.3 trillion lower in 2010 than might have been predicted a year before the crisis. Moreover, even if the world economy more generally did not collapse,

there was no recouping what had been lost (Poloz 2014). The world might have avoided the 'extreme scenario'. Nevertheless, the damage wrought by what some were now calling the 'Great Recession' was enormous, with a loss to global output coming in at around $10 trillion by 2014—close to 15 per cent of global GDP—accompanied by a major loss of jobs (c.60 million) worldwide. Even the prosperous North Atlantic economies felt its impact, and according to one assessment together experienced a cumulative gap of trillions of dollars between actual production and what output would have been had these economies followed the pre-crisis trend. Nor, finally, did 'rising' China escape the economic tidal wave, with the best part of 20 million workers losing their jobs in just under eighteen months (Wolf 2015).

But whatever the causes, and however dire the international consequences, it was in the end the United States that was held responsible for having caused the disaster in the first place. Unsurprisingly, this did little to enhance America's international reputation. Who indeed would now be taking economic lessons from, or be guided by, a country which had palpably failed economically? Who, moreover, would any longer be prepared to view the US as a model worthy of emulation? America may have still remained the most powerful economy in the world; and its economy did begin to recover after 2010. Yet, as a former Clinton adviser pointed out, 2008 was not merely a temporary setback for the United States. It represented something much more. As Roger Altman put it in a hard-hitting piece published in *Foreign Affairs*, the weaknesses that created the crisis in the first place may at some point be repaired. However, 'the damage' done in the interim has put, and will put, the 'American model of free market capitalism under a cloud'. America would in time recover. But there was little doubting that the great crash of 2008 represented a geopolitical setback of the first order. The world in general—and perceptions around the world about the United States—would never be the same again (Altman 2009).

KEY POINTS

- Bush's presidency oversaw an 83 per cent increase in overall federal spending.
- Most economists did not predict the 2008 crisis, but some did, including Joseph Stiglitz and Nouriel Roubini.
- The impact on both the American and the world economy of the 2008 crisis was immense; and some feared that without decisive counter-measures 2008 might have led to a 1930s-style depression.
- The 2008 crash was not just an economic event but also damaged the American model of political economy.

Trump and the economics of fear

Whether or not Donald Trump would have won the White House in 2016 without the 2008 crisis remains an open question. But the very fact that there was a crisis clearly helped him, partly because it gave him a weapon with which to attack what he claimed was an out-of-touch and heartless financial establishment, and partly because 2008 clearly had a negative impact on the living standards of those same Americans who were now prepared to vote for a man who promised to make America 'great again'. The crash of 2008 may not have been the only reason why Trump won; and economics alone cannot account for his remarkable victory. But at the heart of his appeal to millions of low-skilled, less well-educated Americans (most white but by no means all) was a simple economic message: you are hurting economically and I will help take your pain away by working to make your lives better again (Key quotes 5.11).

KEY QUOTES 5.11: OBAMA ON TRUMP

There's going to be the potential for anger, frustration, fear—some of it justified but just misdirected. I think somebody like Mr. Trump's taking advantage of that. That's what he's been exploiting during the course of his campaign.

(President Barack Obama: interview, December 2015)

Trump's true political appeal, however, lay in linking ordinary Americans' economic woes with what he claimed had been the mad rush into the arms of globalization by a distant liberal elite who had no

idea of what it was like being an 'ordinary American'. Globalization might have helped boost corporate profits; and China had clearly done very well out if it. But it had not benefited American workers who had seen their jobs disappear and their communities disintegrate, while the rich and the powerful who worshipped 'globalism over Americanism' stood by and watched. Indeed, they had not just stood by but had, in his view, actively encouraged a process that had helped move 'our jobs, and our wealth, and our factories to Mexico and overseas'. This may have made 'the financial elite who donated to politicians very wealthy'. On the other hand, it had left 'millions of our workers with nothing but poverty and heartache.' Something therefore would have to be done. His administration would no longer be singing 'the false song of globalism' (Hattem 2016).

Such populist rhetoric was a startling new departure for someone seeking to hold the highest office in the land. Presidents before had been at odds over many issues. But on one thing at least there had been agreement: throughout successive presidencies: that free trade and US involvement in the international economy was not merely good for the world but was good for the United States too. There would be losers. Globalization was not without its downsides. Still, from Clinton through G. W. Bush, and on to Obama, there had been a consensus: American prosperity and America's leadership in the world depended on retaining its central position at the heart of an open world economy to which it remained fully committed.

Naturally enough, Trump's nationalist economic rhetoric did not go down very well with other countries. Nor did it go down especially well with most mainstream economists. In fact, the more Trump pointed to the downsides associated with globalization the more they pointed to its manifest benefits. Globalization obviously had its problems, they all agreed. Indeed, some of the more critical members of the economics community had for long been talking about globalization's dark side. But the majority of them still felt that globalization had not only helped reduce poverty in poor countries, but had also raised living standards in the West, including in the United States (Wolf 2015). Others agreed, including, interestingly, the Chinese president, Xi Jinping. Globalization had its 'problems', he confessed at a gathering of the world's elite in early 2017. But one could not hold globalization responsible for all the ills facing the world, and it would be economic folly to do so. Better by far, he continued, to make it work better, not to abandon or attack it. This not only made economic sense but also would ensure that the world was not plunged into a 'trade war' from which nobody would benefit (Xi Jinping, speech to World Economic Forum, 17 January 2017).

Trump, however, remained unrepentant, and the more his economic critics talked up the benefits of free trade the more he seemed to see this as part of a campaign of 'fake news' designed to obscure the truth. He could also take comfort from the fact that there were some analysts, at least, who agreed with what he had to say about globalization and the downside impact he claimed it was having. Estimates varied, but overall it did seem as if there had been no net growth in US industries exposed to international competition from low-wage economies since 1990. Some even calculated that before China entered the world economy in the 1990s, US manufacturing accounted for nearly 25 per cent of US GDP, but by 2016 that figure had nearly halved. Employment in manufacturing had been dropping for a long time. But in the years following China's decision to join the WTO it had fallen even more rapidly, from around 17.5 million in 2001 to about 12.3 million fifteen years later. No doubt there were many reasons why this might have happened. But a number of analysts, albeit with little sympathy for Trump's politics, noted that his claims could not be dismissed altogether. Free trade, it seemed, was not an unalloyed good (Autor, Dorn, and Hanson 2016).

But it was not just a question of manufacturing jobs being lost to other countries. Americans in general seemed to sense that the nation's best days were behind it. In fact, the issue of 'decline' for most of them had very little to do with what the United States was or was not doing abroad, or how many aircraft carrier groups it might have had—in other words, they were not primarily concerned about how much 'power' the US had. Rather, their concern was about their diminished (and diminishing) circumstances at home. For many Americans there was little doubt that life had become much tougher over the years, with wages stagnating and well-paid secure jobs fast disappearing. Moreover, the situation was getting steadily worse. In the 1950s, for instance, more than 80 per cent of all men in the United States had jobs, but by 2012 that figure had fallen to 65 per cent. Furthermore, whereas in 1970, 90 per cent of all thirty-year-olds in America had been better off than their parents at the same age, by 2010 this was only 50 per cent. Finally, in 1971 over

60 per cent of Americans could be defined as 'middle income', whereas half a century later that number had dropped to 50 per cent.

Even the university educated, many thousands of whom had rallied to that old stalwart of the political left, Bernie Sanders, in 2016, could not look to the future with much optimism. Trump may have appealed to 'more-industrial-age-than-information-age Americans' and Sanders to the opposite. But both groups were suffering, and both seemed to be united on at least one thing: that whereas previous generations of whatever age or class could realistically look forward to an improvement in their circumstances, they could no longer do so. The American dream—it appeared—was over. Indeed, how could one think the dream could exist in a country where more and more of its vast wealth was concentrated in fewer and fewer hands? Certainly, with the top 0.1 per cent of American households holding the same amount of wealth as the bottom 90 per cent, it was becoming increasingly hard to think of America as a country where one could dream any longer.

KEY POINTS

- The economic crisis of 2008 helped Donald Trump win the presidential election of 2016.
- The fall in living standards of some Americans made them prepared to vote for a man who promised to make America 'great again'.
- Trump effectively linked ordinary Americans' economic woes with globalization, a stance at odds with previous administrations.
- Americans in general seemed to sense that the nation's best days were behind it.

Conclusion: whither America?

The extraordinary election of 2016, in which two of the key candidates spent the bulk of their time telling Americans (in Sanders' case) that the 'nation' might not be able to 'survive' without reform or (in Trump's) that only he could make the country 'great again', raised the question which had first been asked back in the 1970s—was the US, once again, facing economic decline? (See Key quotes 5.12.) The evidence certainly seemed overwhelming. Indeed, several books and even more articles all seemed to take it as a given that the United States was on the slide. One seasoned observer of the American scene even talked of a 'spectre' haunting the United States—and the name of that spectre was 'decline', measured not just in terms of a declining GDP (in 1969 the US had accounted for 36 per cent of global income but by 2010 it had fallen to 23 per cent) but by a whole range of other metrics too, from the incidence of child poverty (high), through the size of the prison population (big and getting bigger), and on to such things as the quality of health and education (Luce 2012). When one then added into the mix all sorts of other intractable challenges, including, most significantly, the rise of China, then it seemed fairly obvious that the world, to use an increasingly popular term, was becoming 'post-American'.

KEY QUOTES 5.12: DECLINE?

According to *Global Trends 2030*, compiled by the National Intelligence Council, the US will lose its superpower status by 2030.

(US National Intelligence Council 2012)

The idea that America is in decline does not stand up to a rigorous analysis of our national balance sheet of strategic assets and liabilities. The truth is that no nation can match our comprehensive set of enduring strengths.

(Thomas Donilon, former US National Security Advisor—Donilon 2016)

Yet before calling 'time' on the United States, it is at least worth reminding ourselves that this most successful of great powers still retains some quite formidable assets. Even if America's share of world GDP is not as great as it once was, at around $18 trillion the American economy is still the biggest in the world; indeed, several of its states are just as big as, if not bigger than, most sovereign countries. It is also home to some formidable corporations. In fact, nine of the top ten listed companies in the world by market capitalization are American. Meanwhile, the top ten US companies have a combined value that makes them the equivalent of the fifth or sixth largest economy in the world. Nor should we forget that the US dollar remains the reserve currency of choice, that the US is still the biggest source of investment capital in the world, that its universities are among the very best, that it wins more Nobel Prizes than nearly all other countries put

together, and to cap it all, spends more on its military than the next eight countries put together. By comparison China is still, as one expert has put it, a 'partial power' with nothing like the same reach or the same global appeal (Shambaugh 2013).

Of course, comparisons made now may not hold true in five, ten, or even twenty years' time. Nor should our recitation of American strengths lead us to underestimate the many difficult issues facing the country as it moves forward under the most divisive American president of modern times: Donald Trump. Yet even the deeply illiberal Trump may still surprise us. He may indeed be the liberal's worse nightmare. He may yet even be removed from office. But one cannot rule out the possibility that if he remains he may (just) do what his critics claim is impossible: namely radically improve America's economic prospects by cutting taxes at home while acting in an economically more assertive fashion abroad. Certainly, a large part of the American business community has taken him to their heart and no doubt will continue to support him while the US economy grows at around 3 per cent, the stock market continues to rise (standing in early November 2017 at just over 22,000) and profits keep going up. Trump has constantly surprised his critics before, and he may well do so again.

Meanwhile as we look forward into the unknown, we could do a lot worse than look back—as we have done in this chapter—and reflect on America's economic past. This may or may not help us predict America's economic future with any certainty. But it does point to at least one possible, even obvious, conclusion: that from the earliest days of the republic through one civil war, two world wars, one Cold War, and on into the new millennium, the US economy has displayed a sometimes ruthless, but always impressive, capacity for renewal. Politicians may come and politicians may go—some well versed in economics but most not—but even the least well equipped have not been able to stop the American economic powerhouse from moving forward (Lind 2013). Whether it can keep moving forward with the same vigour in the twenty-first century as it displayed in the twentieth is an open question to which there can be no certain answer. But on past form it cannot be ruled out entirely.

QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the economic reasons why the United States sought independence from Great Britain in the late eighteenth century.
2. What factors account for the economic rise of the United States in the nineteenth century?
3. How and why did the First World War change the balance of economic power in the world?
4. What economic lessons did US policy-makers after the Second World War draw from the world's failure to establish a stable international order in the inter-war years?
5. How did the Second World War and the Cold War impact on the US economy?
6. Why did so many analysts think the US was in decline in the 1970s and 80s, and why did critics disagree?
7. What was President Clinton's economic strategy in the 1990s? Did it succeed or fail?
8. What were the main reasons for the economic crisis of 2008, and what damage did the crisis do to both the US and international economies?
9. Was Trump's election of 2016 mainly due to economic factors?
10. Will the twenty-first century be 'American' too?

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6

American foreign policy during the Cold War

Richard Saull

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Introduction

This chapter seeks to provide a theoretically informed overview of American foreign policy during the Cold War. It will cover the main historical developments in US policy: from the breakdown of the wartime alliance with the USSR and the emergence of US–Soviet diplomatic hostility and geopolitical confrontation through to the spread of the Cold War beyond Europe and US military interventions in the third world, and the US role in the ending of the Cold War. The chapter will discuss these historical developments by drawing on different theoretical explanations of US foreign policy—and examining how these are also connected to the historiography of the Cold War: explanations that focus on the role of geopolitical, ideational, and/or socio-economic factors. It aims to highlight the dual concerns of US foreign policy: on the one hand the combined geopolitical–ideological threat from the USSR and the wider communist world; on the other, the role of the US as the hegemonic power in the international capitalist economy; and the evolving and sometimes contradictory relationship between these two areas and how they were resolved by US policy makers.

The discussion of American foreign policy during the Cold War has been dominated by three sets of analytical questions: (1) the role of the US during the emergence of the Cold War; (2) what factors best account for US foreign policy during the Cold War; and (3) the role of US policy in the collapse of Soviet communism and the end of the Cold War. It

is these questions that have helped frame the main historiographical debates in US Cold War diplomatic history. Within the scholarly literature, two theoretical responses have tended to dominate the discussion of these questions. The first has emphasized the role of material or geopolitical factors in accounting for American foreign policy. Simply put, US policy was concerned with addressing the geopolitical and military threat to its security from the Soviet Union. The second response, while recognizing the significance of the geopolitical challenge to American security and international interests, has focused much more on the ideological characteristics of US foreign policy. Thus, it was the communist ideological character of the USSR that was as much of a concern to US policy makers as the geopolitical threat, and, further, the fact that the domestic liberal democratic characteristics of the US, and the way in which key US policy makers were informed by such ideological principles, were also central to determining the means and ends of US foreign policy.

This 'mainstream' debate on American foreign policy during the Cold War has done much to illuminate our understanding of both the Cold War and the character of American foreign policy. However, it rests on a contestable assumption as to what the Cold War was about, namely the post-war bipolar US–Soviet relationship. This account—which could be considered the conventional account—of the Cold War and US foreign policy within it has tended to overlook the socio-economic dimensions of US foreign relations. This refers to the place of economic actors and processes in American foreign policy, as well as the wider concerns—extending beyond the Soviet threat—to include other communist states and radical and revolutionary movements that confronted the US after 1945, and which came to inform the decisions and policies of the US foreign policy bureaucracy during the Cold War. Further, the conventional account has not sufficiently addressed the relationship between the US and its Cold War allies—those in Western Europe in particular—and how these relations contributed to the overall dynamic of the Cold War, particularly with respect to the management of the international economy after 1945.

What I intend to do in this chapter is to provide a theoretically informed overview of American foreign policy during the Cold War, covering the main historical developments within the evolution of the Cold War. As well as addressing the arguments within the mainstream debate on US foreign policy, I will also engage with a wider academic literature, particularly those scholars who draw on an analytical framework informed by a critical and historical-materialist understanding of international relations, to provide a historically richer and more theoretically informed survey of American foreign policy during the Cold War.

The rest of the chapter is organized in the following way: first, I will provide an overview of the main theoretical frameworks accounting for American foreign policy, relating these analytical perspectives to the historiographical debates over US foreign policy in the Cold War; I will then move onto a survey of the history of US foreign policy in the Cold War, weighing up the explanations offered by each theoretical framework.

The Cold War and theorizing American foreign policy

Realism

There are two strands to realist explanations of American foreign policy during the Cold War. On the one hand there are those 'Cold War realists' (Kennan 1984; Kissinger 1961, 1994; Lippman 1947; Morgenthau 1951) who sought to account for the emergence of the Cold War and, later, became public critics of US foreign policy and, on the other hand, there are International Relations theorists (Brooks and Wohlforth 2000/2001; Mearsheimer 2001; Waltz 1979; Wohlforth 1994/95) who have addressed the bipolar relationship and the US role within it. What links these two sets of scholars is their common concern with what they regard as the shifting geopolitical contest between the US and the USSR for ascendancy over post-war Europe and other strategically important areas (the Middle East and East Asia) after the Second World War, and the way in which interests centred on geopolitical and military power—i.e. security—guided US foreign policy. These scholars have, in different ways, questioned the effect of ideological motivations (of anti-communism and/or the upholding and expansion of liberal democratic values) on US policy.

Where they differ is in their respective emphases on US policy in the Cold War. Thus, Mearsheimer and Waltz emphasize the stability of the Cold War

encapsulated in Gaddis's (1987) term, the 'long peace', highlighting how US power countered or balanced Soviet power after 1945 and through the mutual deterrence of nuclear weapons reduced the likelihood of geopolitical competition triggering war. In this sense the Cold War was relatively stable because US policy was driven by geopolitical concerns.

This view contrasts with the public criticisms of US foreign policy voiced by Cold War realists who regarded US foreign policy as too dependent on a militarized form of containment (Kennan 1984) and too influenced by an ideological commitment to spreading liberal democratic (Wilsonian) values in its foreign policy (Morgenthau 1951). According to these critics, the consequence of these failings—of not being 'realist' enough—was that the US became involved in areas of the world, such as Vietnam, where it had few if any strategic interests becoming embroiled in costly wars that did not best serve the national security interests of the US. Consequently, while the Cold War realists agreed with the orthodox view on the origins of the Cold War—that the US had no choice but to react to aggressive moves by the USSR in east-central Europe after 1945 with the doctrine of containment—they disagreed with the orthodox claim that Soviet policy was driven by communist-ideological expansion (Feis 1970) rather than traditional Russian great power manoeuvring. The Soviet threat and the key concern of US policy, then, was the Red Army's military presence in east-central Europe (and the wider expansion of Soviet geopolitical power throughout the Cold War) rather than the declared revolutionary aims of Moscow as the centre of the international communist movement.

With respect to the historiographical debates over US foreign policy during the Cold War, realist-informed arguments were a significant current in the so-called 'orthodox' account of the origins of the Cold War. These accounts, which dominated the early scholarly discussion of the Cold War through the 1950s, rested on what they saw as Soviet aggression in east-central Europe after 1945 and—based on the surveys of US (not Soviet) diplomatic documentation—the hesitations and contingencies of the US response with the announcement of the Truman Doctrine in 1947 and the formation of NATO in 1949. Thus, to these early scholars the US was reactive and proportionate in its response to Soviet actions after 1945. While the scholarly and political influence of this perspective, as we shall see, waned in the 1960s and 1970s, the final stage of the Cold War in the late 1980s and early 1990s saw a sort of revival of the orthodox account. This was seen not only in the claims that the USSR had been forced to concede through the unified and robust Western response to Soviet aggression (i.e. the policy of 'containment' was vindicated), but also through the way in which the Cold War actually ended with the geopolitical re-ordering of Europe.

However, as we shall see in the next section, the orthodox account of the origins and evolution of the Cold War does not fit easily within a realist theoretical framework focused mainly on geopolitical manouvreing. Further, what became known as the 'post-revisionist' account of the origins of the Cold War associated with the work of John Lewis Gaddis in the 1970s (see also Yergin 1977), while continuing to stress the centrality of geopolitical interests and traditional inter-state relations, departed from the orthodox script that essentially blamed the USSR for the Cold War, instead suggesting that Stalin's actions in east-central Europe were mistakenly interpreted as aggressive acts based on communist ideology and were in fact rather a clumsy attempt to realize basic Soviet security interests (Gaddis 1972). Gaddis's intervention reflected a number of developments—both scholarly and political—in the framing of Cold War historiography that facilitated an opening up of the concerns of diplomatic history (for example to the role of personality in foreign policy and the importance of economic issues). Thus, the revisionist assault on the orthodox interpretation of the Cold War and of US behaviour had, obviously, left its mark, particularly in the context of both the Vietnam War and the consolidation of the warming (détente) of US–Soviet diplomatic relations in the early 1970s. Further, this détente suggested that questions around communication and perception and the role of domestic politics were also crucial in determining the US response to Soviet actions, thus diluting the explanatory power of the objectivist or 'positivist' perspective that characterized aspects of the traditionalist accounts of the Cold War.

Ideational approaches

In opposition to realist arguments, ideationally informed explanations of American foreign policy during the Cold War (Crockatt 1995; Koslowski and Kratochwill 1994; Lebow 1994; Schlesinger 1967) dwell on the way in which US foreign policy decision making was to a significant extent conditioned by the

prevailing political values and ideological frameworks located within American domestic politics. According to these scholars, the liberal democratic characteristics of the American polity and the way in which American policy makers viewed themselves—what it meant to be an American and what American values were—influenced not only the foreign policy objectives of the United States, but also how those objectives were realized.

Such accounts emphasize the dismay and revulsion of American leaders towards Soviet political practices in east-central Europe after the Second World War and the way in which an ideological commitment to liberal democratic political and economic values conditioned US policies towards Western Europe after that war. Some scholars, such as David Campbell (1998), go so far as to stress how US foreign policy in the Cold War and the representation of a Soviet threat (and manipulation of that representation) were key factors in the construction of a post-war American national identity based on the idea of 'freedom' as a uniquely American characteristic in contrast to the 'foreign' and 'hostile' ideas and values of socialism, equality, and collectivism. In many respects such positions connect to the idea of 'American exceptionalism' (Hunt 1988) and how this idea has framed much of the political and cultural justification for American foreign policy beyond the Cold War.

In contrast to realism's emphasis on supposedly impersonal and objective geopolitical interests as the guiding principle informing foreign policy, scholars within the 'ideational-constructivist' school (Hopf 2002; Wendt 1992) give greater analytical purchase to the way in which a clash of ideological mind-sets and world views between Soviet communism and American liberalism was played out after the Second World War. This was reflected in the manner in which each superpower related to each of the two halves of divided Europe and the nature of the political institutions each sought to establish. Thus, these scholars argue that whereas the Marshall Plan and NATO reflected and institutionalized liberal democratic values (see Ikenberry 1998/99, 2001; Ruggie 1982), the institutions created by the USSR in east-central Europe bore the ideological hallmark of communist dictatorship.

With regards to the origins and evolution of US foreign policy during the Cold War, ideational approaches have tended to reflect on the language and principles guiding US actions towards the USSR. Briefly, although the US was obviously concerned with the Soviet geopolitical presence in Europe, this became a Cold War because of the way in which that presence was combined with the articulation and institutionalization—through the imposition of communist rule—of a conflicting ideological vision of the post-war world (Schlesinger 1967) in opposition to liberal democratic principles.

Further, as Mervyn Leffler (1994) has argued, US policy towards the USSR after 1945 was strongly influenced by a deep-rooted institutional and wider societal mentality of suspicion and hostility towards the ideology of communism dating from the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and the way in which this—in some respects—virulent anti-communism made difficult any recognition of what some scholars regarded as 'legitimate' Soviet defensive security interests (Gaddis 1972) in east-central Europe after the Second World War. This approach also suggests that US policy makers were unable—as the Cold War progressed—to recognize that communism was not as centrally dominated by Moscow as the prevailing ideological mindset of the US national security bureaucracy believed (LaFeber 1989; Barnet 1972). The failure to compromise or engage the USSR at certain moments in the Cold War, then, is regarded as reflecting the way in which ideational assumptions about communism informed US foreign policy. Such assumptions continued into the closing stages of the Cold War as a number of senior figures in the Reagan and Bush administrations continued to harbour ideologically-determined reservations and suspicions (Risse-Kappen 1994) about Gorbachev's policies and his commitment to fundamentally reforming Moscow's relations with Washington.

As already mentioned, ideationally driven arguments are, to some extent, reflected and aligned with the orthodox historiography of US foreign policy over the Cold War, particularly with respect to the claims that US policy was driven by a distinct set of liberal ideas that took concerns over the communist domination of east-central Europe after 1945 (Schlesinger, Jr. 1967) as seriously as the deployment of the Red Army there. However, the significance of this liberal democratic ideology—'Wilsonianism'—in explaining and justifying what was regarded as the defensive and legitimate response to the United States to Soviet actions in east-central Europe after 1945 shifted through the historiographical debate in the 1960s as ideas and ideology came to be seen quite differently. In this rendering, the ideological imperatives that directed US foreign policy

were seen as reflecting and promoting an imperialist—rather than a liberal—vision of the post-war international order. Articulated in the revisionist accounts of the origins and evolution of the Cold War from the 1960s onwards (Horowitz 1967; Kolko 1969; Williams 1959), many of these focused on the ideological commitment of US policy makers to expand liberal democracy and market economies as a veneer for what was, in reality, a capitalist-imperialist domination of the world economy by the United States.

I will come back to this later in the chapter, but for now we can say that within the historiography of US foreign policy during the Cold War, ideationally driven accounts have shifted between seeing the US as either a defensive and liberal power committed to a rules-based and consensual international order or an aggressive and imperialist one that has provoked confrontations with other states, as outlined in some of the revisionist accounts of the Cold War. So, while ideas or ideology were seen to matter within Cold War historiography, there was no consensus as to whether or not such ideas reflected a genuine commitment to upholding and expanding liberal democracy or rather were motivated by the promotion of US imperialism.[1]

Socio-economic approaches

Those scholars that focus on the way in which socio-economic structures and processes are central to explaining American foreign policy making during the Cold War (Cox 1984; Halliday 1986; Horowitz 1967; Kolko 1969; Saull 2001, 2007) have been concerned with the specifically *capitalist* properties of American foreign policy. These scholars highlight two dimensions to the capitalist character of American foreign policy. The first is that both American (economic) actors—businesses, corporations, and individuals (and trade unions)—and processes—production, investment, trade, distribution, and consumption (as well as conflicts between capitalists and workers)—located within the sphere of the market economy played an important role in the international relations of the United States during the Cold War. In particular, these actors and processes conditioned the implementation and impact of American foreign policy particularly towards other capitalist states with respect to the way in which such processes helped promote stability, cooperation, and economic development within and among these states, as well as furthering American national security interests. In many respects these approaches overlap with those liberal accounts of US foreign policy, and with the work of G. John Ikenberry (1998/99; 2001). Similarly, both approaches—neo-Marxist (Cox 1987; Gill 1992; Rupert 1995) as much as liberal—deploy the concept of 'hegemony' to describe and explain the *differentia specifica* of US global power and the way in which the largely consensual and legitimate leadership of the US over the Western world after 1945 was reflected in its foreign policy. Where the two perspectives differ is that while Ikenberry and others tend to emphasize the way in which the political-institutional character of the American state conditioned the nature of its power and foreign policy, the more Marxist-informed approaches stress the structural properties of the capitalist world economy and the role of dominant class interests.

As much as American foreign relations during the Cold War were, then, concerned with physical security encapsulated in military power and strategic alliances, so they were also concerned with issues of economic security and prosperity, particularly with respect to the way in which international economic processes influenced the health and prosperity of the domestic political economy of the United States. Simply put, the upholding of a liberal, open, and capitalist American economy was, in part, conditional on the existence of a wider international capitalist system that was also characterized by liberal principles of openness.

The second capitalist dimension of American foreign policy is that the American state is capitalist, meaning that its institutional structure, jurisdiction, and policies not only rest on the relative separation of the sphere of the state (politics) from economic activities of production, exchange, investment, and consumption located in the market, but also that the policies of the American state seek to uphold this particular organization of society. According to these scholars, then, when we refer to American foreign relations we are in fact referring to something more than the formal diplomatic relations between states but also to other (socio-economic) actors and processes committed to preserving and expanding capitalist relations of production and exchange and, with particular significance for the Cold War and US interventions in the third world, the upholding and protection of private property rights.

This approach to American foreign policy is as much concerned to account for US relations with other capitalist states as it is with the bipolar relationship after the Second World War and the way in which capitalist *social* or class interests pervaded US national security policy. Consequently, for these scholars the Soviet threat

was not primarily because of its geopolitical presence within east-central Europe but rather that this geopolitical presence was based upon a different and antagonistic set of socio-economic arrangements encapsulated in the communist organization of society and politics.

It was not, then—as suggested by ideational scholars—mainly a concern with the different ideological values of the Soviet leadership and the way in which this challenged US post-war goals (see Westad 2005) but rather with the fact that the socio-economic organization and reproduction of the Soviet type of society (and its expansion into east-central Europe and beyond) removed a geo-economic space from involvement in capitalism, cutting off potential markets for US and international capital, as well as claiming to be a societal alternative to American-led capitalism. Further, it was not only that the USSR threatened the international (and domestic American) social reproduction of a capitalist kind of society, but also that other revolutionary states—which emerged throughout the history of the Cold War—extended this threat, as did those revolutionary and communist social and political movements active throughout the Cold War who were committed to overthrowing capitalist social arrangements (Halliday 1986; Saull 2001, 2007).

With regard to the historiography of the Cold War, socio-economic arguments came to shift the debate in the 1960s with a number of publications—the key ones being the work of Fleming (1961) and Williams (1959)—that challenged the orthodox account, giving much greater emphasis to American agency in triggering diplomatic hostility and the breakdown of the alliances of the Second World War . Further, these approaches centred on the dynamics and contradictions of the workings of the US capitalist economy and how this stimulated a distinct kind of American 'open door' imperialism (Williams 1959)[2] that fuelled the Cold War, particularly in the third world, where the US confronted neither the USSR nor communists, necessarily, but rather local radical nationalists and socialists such as Fidel Castro and Sukarno. In the context of the controversies around the US military intervention in Vietnam and how this ended up shattering the prevailing domestic Cold War consensus, such 'radical' arguments gained much wider academic and political acceptance than might otherwise have been the case.

Now that I have provided an overview of the main theoretical perspectives on explaining American foreign policy during the Cold War and anchored these perspectives in the historiography of the Cold War, I will spend of the rest of the chapter examining the key historical developments in American foreign policy, interspersing the historical narrative with reflections on the varying analytical strengths of each of the three approaches outlined above.

KEY POINTS

- There are three main theoretical approaches to American foreign policy during the Cold War: realist, ideational, and socio-economic.
- There are two realist approaches to US foreign policy in the Cold War: (1) Cold War realists, who accounted for the origins of the Cold War and later became critics of US policy; and (2) international relations theorists concerned with the US role in the post-war bipolar relationship.
- Both approaches are concerned with the role of geopolitical factors in US foreign policy towards the USSR and have tended to downplay the ideological motivations in determining US policy.
- Ideational approaches stress the role of liberal democratic ideas and values in determining the objectives of US foreign policy during the Cold War and how those objectives were realized.
- Ideological assumptions about the nature of communism conditioned US foreign policy at the start of the Cold War and influenced Washington's assumptions about Soviet policy (making compromise and negotiation difficult). Such assumptions also influenced US policy during the Reagan and Bush administrations in the closing stages of the Cold War.
- Socio-economic approaches focus on the capitalist character of American foreign policy: the role of socio-economic actors and processes in US foreign policy, and the way in which American foreign policy has been concerned with internationalizing the domestic-capitalist character of US society.
- This approach focuses on US relations with other capitalist states and how US policy tried to condition domestic political and economic developments within these states, as well as the way in which the USA was concerned with the threat to international capitalism from other revolutionary movements and states, not just the USSR.

The origins of the Cold War and containment

The debate on the origins of the Cold War

The analysis of American foreign policy in the early period after the Second World War has been dominated by the debate over the US role in causing the breakdown of the wartime alliance and the triggering of diplomatic hostility and geopolitical confrontation between Washington and Moscow. This has been framed in the so-called 'orthodox-revisionist debate' on the origins of the Cold War. While the 'orthodox interpretation' of the origins of the Cold War sees US diplomacy as rather passive and reactive in the face of acts of Soviet aggression in east-central Europe (Kennan 1947—see Key quotes 6.1; Feis 1967; Schlesinger 1967) highlighted by the creeping Sovietization of the region between 1945 and 1948, the alternative, revisionist view, stresses the conservative (rather than revolutionary) and defensive character of Soviet policy and the more proactive and expansionist policies of Washington.

KEY QUOTES 6.1: 'X' WRITING ON 'THE SOURCES OF SOVIET CONDUCT'

[W]e are going to continue for a long time to find the Russians difficult to deal with. It does not mean that they should be considered as embarked upon a do-or-die program to overthrow our society by a given date ...

In these circumstances it is clear that the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies. It is important to note, however, that such a policy has nothing to do with outward histrionics: with threats or blustering or superfluous gestures of outward 'toughness.' While the Kremlin is basically flexible in its reaction to political realities, it is by no means unamenable to considerations of prestige. Like almost any other government, it can be placed by tactless and threatening gestures in a position where it cannot afford to yield even though this might be dictated by its sense of realism. The Russian leaders are keen judges of human psychology, and as such they are highly conscious that loss of temper and of self-control is never a source of strength in political affairs. They are quick to exploit such evidences of weakness. For these reasons, it is a *sine qua non* of successful dealing with Russia that the foreign government in question should remain at all times cool and collected and that its demands on Russian policy should be put forward in such a manner as to leave the way open for a compliance not too detrimental to Russian prestige ..

In the light of the above, it will be clearly seen that the Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the Western world is something that can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counterforce at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and manoeuvres of Soviet policy, but which cannot be charmed or talked out of existence. The Russians look forward to a duel of infinite duration, and they see that already they have scored great successes.

(George Kennan, writing as 'X' in *Foreign Affairs*, July 1947—Kennan 1947)

In this account, revisionist scholars (Horowitz 1967, Kolko and Kolko 1972) argue that the US used its post-war economic power and dominance not only to try to undermine Soviet influence in east-central Europe by drawing these states into a US-led international economic system, decoupling them from economic links with the USSR, but also to pressure other capitalist states (in Western Europe and Britain in particular) to agree to, and adopt, the policies that would realize a distinctly American vision of how the post-war international economy should be organized—a vision that would have forced these states not only to open up their economies to US investment, but also to dismantle their imperial trading blocs, which had closed off access to American capital.

This debate has generated a huge scholarly literature (Ambrose and Brinkley 1997; Gaddis 1987, 1997; Leffler and Painter 1994; Paterson 1988) that has benefited from and expanded with the post–Cold War opening of Soviet diplomatic archives. I don't have the space to address many of the issues discussed in this literature nor to provide a historical narrative of the key events in the move from alliance to confrontation. Instead, I will make reference to some of the key historical developments that each of the three different theoretical approaches highlight to assess their relative merits in explaining US foreign policy in the early Cold War and, in doing so, highlight the relative strengths and weaknesses of the orthodox and revisionist accounts of the early Cold War, respectively.

As suggested above in my survey of the different theoretical perspectives on US foreign policy, each approach emphasizes one or other set of factors to account for American behaviour: geopolitical, ideational, and/or socio-economic. To what extent, then, can we explain the shift in US foreign policy towards the Cold War through a focus on each of these factors? The end of the Second World War saw Europe and—though to a lesser extent—the world beyond continental Europe structured around the geopolitical dominance of the United States and the Soviet Union—the superpowers. This geopolitical outcome was coloured by the differing political and ideological values associated with and institutionalized within each superpower on the one hand liberal democracy and on the other communist dictatorship. Further, these differences in ideology and political values were matched by the very different forms of societal organization and socio-economic structure that characterized the USA and the USSR respectively.

The emergence of containment

What is clear is that this post-war geopolitical arrangement did not immediately settle into the fixed and frozen division and strategic competition that was to characterize the Cold War. Initially, at least, the US did not automatically see the geopolitical outcome of the Second World War as a *necessary* cause for diplomatic and geopolitical hostility to develop with Moscow. It was to be the combination of Soviet actions in east-central Europe and the American response to them that would trigger confrontation. In this sense both orthodox and revisionist arguments contain elements of truth. Soviet policy was perceived by the US as aggressive and against the spirit, if not the letter, of the Yalta and Potsdam agreements over the future of post-war Europe, while US policies, particularly towards western-occupied Germany, were seen as hostile to Soviet security interests. The key analytical issue here is that issues of perception, interpretation, and, crucially, domestic politics within the United States were to play an important role in determining the response to Soviet actions in east-central Europe, something which neither the orthodox nor the revisionist approach sufficiently recognizes.

The 'Sovietization' of east-central Europe and the particular way that this was carried out—through the gradual elimination of non-communist political forces and the coercive economic integration of east-central Europe into the Soviet economic system between 1945 and 1948—was crucial in shifting US perspectives on how the post-war international system would be organized. These developments and their militarized character not only entrenched the geopolitical consequences of the Second World War but also appeared to threaten the political security of Western Europe and other areas (Iran and Turkey) that bordered the Soviet Union. The illiberal and undemocratic character of Soviet policies were, then, important in colouring the geopolitical outcome of the war. Simply put, for US leaders, Soviet actions communicated that Moscow could no longer be seen as a partner or ally, but rather as a competitor and foe committed to establishing a very different if not antagonistic set of post-war arrangements over east-central Europe.

This change in the geopolitical outlook of the post-war world, recognized by Truman and his advisors in the early months after the end of the war, now needed to be conveyed to the American public and Congress, who had to be persuaded to support a shift in US policy to a more forthright opposition to Soviet actions. In this regard, Soviet policies—notably the rigged elections in Hungary and Poland in 1947, the coup in Czechoslovakia in February 1948, and the Berlin blockade later that year—provided helpful ammunition for the struggle to persuade the American public, but it took a campaign of speeches, publicity, and, to some extent, manipulation, exaggeration, and propaganda waged by US government agencies and sympathetic newspapers and other opinion-formers to mobilize public and Congressional support behind a policy of containment and confrontation.

What is also significant in the move towards the containment of the USSR was that two crucial developments, which triggered policy responses that became landmarks in the onset of the Cold War, did not directly involve or concern the USSR. Thus, although US policy was directed towards the USSR, in some cases US policy was in *response* to actions carried out by other communist or revolutionary states or movements. In this sense, US foreign policy in the beginning of the Cold War—as it was to be throughout the Cold War—was as much concerned with responding to the actions of non-Soviet forms of communist power as it was with responding to Soviet actions.

The Truman Doctrine

The first development concerned the situation in Greece, where communists were fighting a civil war

against a right-wing pro-Western government supported by British troops. It was the decision by the British government to end its support of the Greek government in February 1947—due to economic exigencies—that raised the spectre of communist victory. Such a development was seen as posing a threat not only to the security of Turkey, but also to that of the wider Middle East, and it was this that led Truman to deliver a speech—what became known as the 'Truman Doctrine'—in early March to both houses of Congress, and to the wider audience of the American public, calling on the American people to shoulder the burden of 'support[ing] free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures' (see Key quotes 6.2).

KEY QUOTES 6.2: THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE

President Truman's address before a joint session of Congress, 12 March 1947

The peoples of a number of countries of the world have recently had totalitarian regimes forced upon them against their will. The Government of the United States has made frequent protests against coercion and intimidation, in violation of the Yalta Agreement, in Poland, Rumania, and Bulgaria. I must also state that in a number of other countries there have been similar developments.

At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one.

One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression.

The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio; fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.

I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way.

It is necessary only to glance at a map to realize that the survival and integrity of the Greek nation are of grave importance in a much wider situation. If Greece should fall under the control of an armed minority, the effect upon its neighbor, Turkey, would be immediate and serious. Confusion and disorder might well spread throughout the entire Middle East.

Moreover, the disappearance of Greece as an independent state would have a profound effect upon those countries in Europe whose peoples are struggling against great difficulties to maintain their freedoms and their independence while they repair the damages of war.

It would be an unspeakable tragedy if these countries, which have struggled so long against overwhelming odds, should lose that victory for which they sacrificed so much. Collapse of free institutions and loss of independence would be disastrous not only for them but for the world. Discouragement and possibly failure would quickly be the lot of neighboring peoples striving to maintain their freedom and independence.

(*Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman, 1947* 1963: 176)

Although Congress took further convincing to grant Truman's demands for aid to Greece, this was to become the first step in America's political and military commitment to the security of Western Europe and, later, its global commitment to containing communist expansion. The significance of this for our understanding of American foreign policy was that US policy was in response to how the prospect of a *local* communist revolution could have geopolitical consequences—by extending communist power allied to the USSR—and, further, the crucial role played by politics and perception and, to a not insignificant degree, personality in determining what the US did.

The Marshall plan

The other key development concerned the economic future of post-war Europe and how this related to the US's wish that the post-war international economy should be organized not only so as prevent the likelihood of another global economic crisis—as occurred in the 1930s, which provided an important causal dynamic to the origins of World War Two—but also to allow the US to best realize its own economic interests. The framework for organizing the post-war international economy was decided—under the guidance of the US Treasury—at the Bretton Woods conference in New Hampshire in 1944. The agreement laid out a framework for a liberal and open international

trading system: that is, a framework that not only tended to reflect American political and ideological interests and values, but also would ensure that significant economic benefits would flow towards the US as Western European economies (and their imperial possessions) would be opened up to take American goods. The Bretton Woods agreement, then, seemed to bear out revisionist claims and, more broadly, the anlysis of socio-economic approaches to a significant degree, with respect to explaining the importance of socio-economic interests—those of American exporters and of the American economy as a whole—to US foreign policy.

However, the original Bretton Woods blueprint was to be short-lived, as a combination of developing geopolitical tensions with Moscow and mounting economic difficulties within Western Europe through 1946–7 caused a US rethink. The growing economic crisis in Western Europe raised two prospects of concern for the US. First, an economic crisis in Western Europe would force these economies to move towards protectionist economic policies, thus closing off their economies from meaningful international economic exchange and scuppering the hopes and plans of the US. This would not only have had negative consequences on the US economy—depriving US exporters of foreign markets—but would have also removed a source of leverage over the post-war political future of Western Europe and the wider international economy, as these economies would have removed themselves from American influence.

The second concern was that communist and other pro-Soviet forces in Western Europe would take advantage of any crisis to seize power and push Western Europe in a pro-Soviet direction. In this case the US was concerned less with Soviet policies and more with how, potentially, revolutionary domestic political developments within Western European states could have geopolitical consequences favourable to the USSR. The US response to the growing economic difficulties in Western Europe, and to the possibility of one or other of the two possible future scenarios emerging, was the Marshall Plan, announced by the US secretary of state, George Marshall, in a speech at Harvard University in June 1947.

The Marshall Plan was aimed at aiding European economic recovery, thus fending off economic crisis but also drawing those states in receipt of Marshall aid into closer economic links with the US and encouraging them to implement policies—revised from Bretton Woods—that the US found acceptable. Further, the diplomatic and institutional framework that the US developed to deliver Marshall aid—through the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) –would provide a vehicle for developing links with east-central European countries. On this point, revisionist arguments have some substance. Any moves by east-central European states to join the Marshall Plan framework would have not only integrated them into a pro-US liberal institutional and political framework, but would also have fundamentally challenged Soviet economic and security interests in the region by weakening the ability of the USSR to determine internal political and economic developments within these states. Consequently, Moscow compelled east-central European states to reject such overtures.

The Marshall Plan is significant for understanding US foreign policy in the early Cold War for a number of reasons. It highlights how US foreign policy was concerned with developments within the domestic politics of other capitalist states, particularly in Western Europe. Thus, contrary to the analysis of orthodox (and realist) approaches, it was the case not only that the US did meddle in the domestic affairs of Western European states in the early Cold War (and after) as a way of influencing political developments in a way compatible with US interests, but also that this was a crucial area of concern for US foreign policy.

This suggests that the Cold War was not, then, just about international diplomatic and geopolitical relations between the superpowers, but also concerned political and economic developments within the domestic politics of other capitalist states (Rupert 1995). In this respect, while the USSR was a geopolitical threat, the flow of political developments, conflict, and economic instability and crisis within other capitalist states was—throughout the history of the Cold War—a socio-economic challenge to the US. The possibility remained that a government could come to power and not only oppose US economic interests but also alter its country's geopolitical relationship with the USA by opting for neutrality or withdrawal from alliance with the US (Colás and Saull 2006: 12–17). The fact that this never occurred does not mean that it was not a constant concern for the US or that the US did not implement policies to ensure that it didn't happen.

While Marshall aid provided an economic means for the US to realize its foreign policy objectives of preventing economic crisis as well as tying West European states into closer diplomatic relations with the US, this

concern with domestic political developments saw the US—or, more precisely, the newly created Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)—play an important role in thwarting the constitutional political ambitions of the communist party in Italy in the 1948 elections. The Marshall Plan also alerts us to the *form* of US foreign policy. Whereas the formal machinery of diplomacy was utilized to introduce the Marshall Plan, a number of scholars (Carew 1987; Rupert 1995; Saull 2007) have highlighted how Marshall aid was organized through a broader coalition of private, non-governmental agencies. US companies and trade unions (the American Federation of Labor–Conference of Industrial Organizations) played a key role in 'selling' Marshall aid to European trade unionists and workers and encouraging the establishment of anti-communist trade unions (see also van Dongen 2014).

The analytical significance of this goes beyond how we think about the nature and delivery of the Marshall Plan; it also highlights the socio-economic or class dimensions of Marshall aid and American foreign policy more generally. The foreign policy of the US (or any other state for that matter), then, is likely to have uneven socio-economic consequences, not only for the society in the country that a policy is directed at, but also for the 'home' society where the policy is made. Thus, while the US did have to make revisions to its original blueprint regarding the character of the post-war international economy, it was a price worth paying in that private property rights were protected and the interests of capital tended to take preference over those of workers (Cox 1987; Rupert 1995: 43–9). In sum, then, the Marshall Plan could be seen as reflecting an attempt to promote a particular form of societal organization within Western European states that maintained a balance of promoting economic stability and thus social peace and political alliance with Washington, founded on the privileging of capitalist socio-economic interests.

The twin pillars of US Cold War foreign policy

By early 1948, then, the US had established the key pillars of its Cold War foreign policy. On the one hand was the military-geopolitical dimension of containment highlighted in its commitment through the Truman Doctrine to the defence of 'free peoples' facing 'communist subversion and aggression'. Once this threshold had been crossed, it became much easier for Truman and future presidents to persuade Congress and the American public to shoulder further and heavier burdens in the struggle against Soviet and communist expansion. Thus, in April 1949 the implicit commitment to the military defence of the USA's West European allies in the Truman Doctrine was formalized with the establishment of NATO.

However, in recognizing this we also need to acknowledge the dynamic within this relationship of not only Soviet policy, but also that of other communist movements and states and the way in which throughout the Cold War the US leadership was unable to differentiate the diplomacy of Moscow from the policies of other communist states and the actions of communist movements. This highlights the strengths of ideational approaches to understanding US foreign policy: that is, how political developments in other states were *interpreted* as having negative international consequences for the United States.

Further, we also need to recognize the way in which US foreign policy decisions— both in the early period of the Cold War and throughout its duration—were influenced by the behaviour of its key allies. In this regard the US decision to make a political and military commitment to the defence of Western Europe was conditional on the policy decisions of these states. Geir Lundestad's (1998) phrase 'empire by invitation' nicely captures the character and dynamic of the relationship between the US and its Western European allies after 1947. Western European states, spurred on by Churchill's 'iron curtain speech' of March 1946, which called for a Western alliance against what he regarded as a growing Soviet threat, effectively requested and welcomed US diplomatic and military support and protection.

Thus, while recognizing the hierarchy and distribution of political and military power within the Atlantic Alliance during the Cold War we also need to recognize the way in which the US made efforts to accommodate the interests and concerns of its allies. This has already been mentioned with regard to the Marshall Plan and the way it was organized and delivered through the multilateral OEEC, but it goes beyond this in that the ruling elites within Western Europe tended to share the concerns of US policy makers to a significant degree, thus assisting the implementation of US policy and facilitating the legitimacy of institutions such as NATO and the basing of tens of thousands of US troops in Western Europe.

The second element of US Cold War foreign policy concerned the economic framework governing the international capitalist economy and US relations with the other advanced capitalist states. Here, the US was forced to make concessions to the economic and social needs of other capitalist states, even if that meant—in the short term—tolerating economic policies it found questionable. Further, and in contrast to the revisionist argument on the aim of US foreign relations, US policy contributed to the economic growth of the other capitalist states, to such a degree that by the late 1960s these states—Germany, Japan, and France in particular—were beginning to eat away at US post-war economic ascendancy in the production of manufactured goods. However, while recognizing the economically benign consequences of US policies we also have to acknowledge the way in which these arrangements rested on a rather uneven distribution of social or class power within these states, reflected in the disproportionate flow of benefits to owners and managers of capital (Cox 1987; Rupert 1995).

KEY POINTS

- Discussion of the role of the USA in the origins of the Cold War is dominated by the 'orthodox–revisionist' debate. The orthodox approach argues that the USA was naive about the nature of Soviet power and responded to Soviet aggression in east-central Europe, while the revisionists argue that the USA tried to impose its economic system on east-central Europe, causing the division of Europe and provoking Soviet hostility.
- The policy of containment (of communism) emerged out of the dynamic between the differing policies of Moscow and Washington towards Europe immediately after the Second World War and, in particular, the way the USA interpreted Soviet policies as being hostile.
- The Truman Doctrine was announced in a context of what were seen as aggressive actions by the USSR in east-central Europe and the inability of Britain to continue to aid anti-communist forces in the Greek civil war. It was this context that allowed the Truman administration to persuade the American public that it needed to shoulder the responsibility of containing communism.
- The US security commitment to western Europe was also influenced by the policies of west European governments, who 'invited' the USA to be responsible for their defence from the Soviet threat.
- The Marshall Plan was concerned with addressing the post-war economic crisis within Europe, and thus ensuring that west European states did not pursue economic policies that challenged American economic interests.
- The Marshall Plan saw the US compromise on its original (Bretton Woods) plan for how the post-war international economy would be organized by accepting some of the economic needs of west European states.
- Marshall aid saw the involvement of US non-state actors (businesses and trade unions) in the implementation of the Marshall Plan. It also helped promote economic growth in western Europe, which promoted political stability while preserving capitalism.

Korea, NSC-68, and the militarization of US foreign policy

Thus far I have focused on US policy towards Europe in the early period after the Second World War. The US's relations with both its allies and its Soviet foe were to remain relatively stable after 1949. With the frustration of the Soviets' attempt—through the almost year-long (June 1948–May 1949) blockade of Berlin—to thwart Western policy towards divided Germany, the division of Germany and Europe into two opposing zones was sealed. This division was soon to become highly militarized with the stationing of massed divisions of tanks and troops on either side of the divide, which effectively froze the European Cold War, ushering in a period of militarily enforced stability until the late 1980s. However, the momentum of events in Europe and the direction of US policy were to be influenced by events elsewhere—in Asia—which would result in a much greater militarization of US foreign policy and containment.

Two events would propel the US towards a much bolder and more ambitious containment policy, thus assisting those tendencies within the US polity that favoured such a posture and making it easier to convince Congress and the American public of the need to militarize containment. The two events were the communist revolution in China in 1949 and the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 with the invasion of the pro-Western South by the communist North. The significance of these developments was to be profound. They were to inaugurate US military interventions in the former colonial or 'third' world, which would culminate in the intervention in Vietnam between 1965 and 1973. As the dynamic of Soviet policy in Europe conditioned and triggered US responses there, rather than the US having a grand design (as suggested by revisionists) regardless of Soviet actions, so developments involving other communist movements and states would provide the key factors in the shaping of containment, leading to the involvement of the US in a number of 'hot wars' in the third world.

The failure of US policy towards China, which critics of the Truman administration called 'the loss of China', was a major strategic setback (Paterson 1988: 54–75) as US post-war planning had always assumed that China would be a source of post-war stability and alliance in Asia. It also had consequences for US policy towards Japan, as Japan now became much more central to US security in the Pacific and, with China going communist, more at risk from communist expansion.

Following the pattern towards Europe and the move towards post-war demobilization of its military forces at the end of the Second World War in the Pacific, US policy was filtered through local agents, specifically the anti-communist Kuomintang government in China. Here, US policy was characterized by ineffectiveness and frustration despite providing significant financial and military aid to the Kuomintang in its struggle with the Chinese communists. Unable to intervene themselves—the scale of any intervention in a country the size of China would have required tens of thousands of troops, as well as contradicting Washington's commitment to decolonization and national self-determination—the US was reliant on the incompetent, corrupt, and feckless Kuomintang.

The Korean War

However, despite the shock of the communist victory in China it was the North Korean invasion of South Korea—which the US interpreted as an act of aggression across a recognized international boundary—in June 1950 that was to be the defining event in shifting containment from a policy of diplomatic threats to the construction of a major military alliance in NATO and Japan (with the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty) and active military interventions in the third world, beginning with the dispatch of US combat forces to the Korean peninsula soon after the invasion. While the 'loss of China' was a much greater strategic setback, it was the result of an internal civil war. This contrasted with Korea, where—despite the fact that the boundary dividing the north and south of the peninsula had no legal basis—the communist invasion appeared to signal a new brazenness and aggression in communist policy and to bear out the arguments of anti-communist hardliners in the US government. They interpreted events in Korea as part of a co-ordinated pattern of communist expansion directed by Moscow, rather than as a local civil war only cautiously supported by the Soviets and the Chinese (Cumings 1981/1990).

NSC-68

Other than the decision to send troops to repel North Korean forces, the defining decision relating to the Korean War was Truman's approval of the proposals outlined in National Security Council Report number 68 (NSC-68—see Key quotes 6.3) in September 1950. Truman's decision moved the US towards a containment of Soviet and communist advances by military means, primarily because the Truman administration—and later US administrations—regarded Soviet/communist advances as occurring through military aggression, across territorial boundaries, rather than, as in the case of Korea (and other, later cases), as the result of internal political, socio-economic, and military dynamics. With US troops engaged on the ground against Soviet- and Chinese-backed communist invaders (and after the Soviets had detonated an atomic device in August 1949, earlier than the US had anticipated), the perception of a much more threatening global context led to momentous changes in US foreign policy.

KEY QUOTES 6.3: NSC-68

VII. Present risks

A. GENERAL

[T]he integrity and vitality of our system is in greater jeopardy than ever before in our history. Even if there were no Soviet Union we would face the great problem of the free society, accentuated many fold in this industrial age, of reconciling order, security, the need for participation, with the requirement of freedom. We would face the fact that in a shrinking world the absence of order among nations is becoming less and less tolerable. The Kremlin design seeks to impose order among nations by means which would destroy our free and democratic system. The Kremlin's possession of atomic weapons puts new power behind its design, and increases the jeopardy to our system. It adds new strains to the uneasy equilibrium-without-order which exists in the world and raises new doubts in men's minds whether the world will long tolerate this tension without moving toward some kind of order, on somebody's terms …
The risks we face are of a new order of magnitude, commensurate with the total struggle in which we are engaged. For a free society there is never total victory, since freedom and democracy are never wholly attained, are always in the process of being attained. But defeat at the hands of the totalitarian is total defeat. These risks crowd in on us, in a shrinking world of polarized power, so as to give us no choice, ultimately, between meeting them effectively or being overcome by them

B. SPECIFIC

It is quite clear from Soviet theory and practice that the Kremlin seeks to bring the free world under its dominion by the methods of the cold war. The preferred technique is to subvert by infiltration and intimidation. Every institution of our society is an instrument which it is sought to stultify and turn against our purposes. Those that touch most closely our material and moral strength are obviously the prime targets, labor unions, civic enterprises, schools, churches, and all media for influencing opinion. The effort is not so much to make them serve obvious Soviet ends as to prevent them from serving our ends, and thus to make them sources of confusion in our economy, our culture, and our body politic. The doubts and diversities that in terms of our values are part of the merit of a free system, the weaknesses and the problems that are peculiar to it, the rights and privileges that free men enjoy, and the disorganization and destruction left in the wake of the last attack on our freedoms, all are but opportunities for the Kremlin to do its evil work …
Since everything that gives us or others respect for our institutions is a suitable object for attack, it also fits the Kremlin's design that where, with impunity, we can be insulted and made to suffer indignity the opportunity shall not be missed, particularly in any context which can be used to cast dishonor on our country, our system, our motives, or our methods. Thus the means by which we sought to restore our own economic health in the '30's, and now seek to restore that of the free world, come equally under attack. The military aid by which we sought to help the free world was frantically denounced by the Communists in the early days of the last war, and of course our present efforts to develop adequate military strength for ourselves and our allies are equally denounced …
At the same time the Soviet Union is seeking to create overwhelming military force, in order to back up infiltration with intimidation. In the only terms in which it understands strength, it is seeking to demonstrate to the free world that force and the will to use it are on the side of the Kremlin, that those who lack it are decadent and doomed. In local incidents it threatens and encroaches both for the sake of local gains and to increase anxiety and defeatism in all the free world …
The risk that we may thereby be prevented or too long delayed in taking all needful measures to maintain the integrity and vitality of our system is great. The risk that our allies will lose their determination is greater. And the risk that in this manner a descending spiral of too little and too late, of doubt and recrimination, may present us with ever narrower and more desperate alternatives, is the greatest risk of all. For example, it is clear that our present weakness would prevent us from offering effective resistance at any of several vital pressure points. The only deterrent we can present to the Kremlin is the evidence we give that we may make any of the critical points which we cannot hold the occasion for a global war of annihilation.

(Foreign Relations of the United States 1950 1976)

In the following months and years the US moved towards implementing the recommendations of NSC-68—something that would have been much less likely without the events of June 1950. US troop strengths in Europe were increased and NATO was given much greater military bite with the decision—supported by the US—in favour of the rearmament of West Germany in May 1955. By 1953 US military production was seven times that of 1950, the army had grown by 50 per cent and the US also doubled the number of air groups to ninety-five (Ambrose and Brinkley 1997: 122; Leffler and Painter 1994: 118). Another key consequence of the Korean War was the stepping up of US military aid to French forces in Indochina fighting communist-led anti-colonial forces. This was to be the first step in what would eventually become the Vietnam War.

KEY POINTS

- The spread of the Cold War to Asia significantly influenced US policy towards western Europe and the increasing militarization of containment after 1950.
- The 1949 communist revolution in China was seen by critics of the Truman administration as a failure of US policy due to the US's reliance on the corrupt and incompetent Kuomintang government.
- The communist victory in China undermined US plans for the post-war future of East Asia, increasing the importance of Japan to US interests, as well as making Japan more vulnerable to communist influence.
- Despite the shock of the Chinese Revolution the key turning point for US policy came with North Korea's invasion of South Korea in June 1950. This was perceived as an act of aggression across a territorial border, triggering US military intervention in defence of the South and ushering in a policy of US military interventions in third-world conflicts.
- As well as dispatching troops to the Korean peninsula, the US initiated a massive programme of rearmament—as proposed in NSC-68—instigating the militarization of containment.
- The Korean War also saw a major increase in US aid for French forces fighting communist forces in Indochina and the USA agreeing to the rearmament of West Germany within NATO.

Cold War in the third world

As indicated in the previous section, the US military intervention in the Korean civil war from 1950 initiated what would become a dominant and increasingly controversial aspect of US foreign policy in the Cold War—military interventions in support of allied governments and/or against revolutionary states.[3] The outstanding case in this regard was the US military intervention in Vietnam between 1965 and 1973. The scale and length of the US intervention in Vietnam (which actually began in 1950 with its support for the French and continued from 1954 through its support of the attempts to create a post-colonial independent anti-communist state in the south of Vietnam) contrasted with numerous other interventions in Latin America, the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and other parts of Asia through smaller-scale military and covert interventions involving the CIA and/or the funding, training, arming, and directing of local anti-communist forces waging forms of armed struggle against revolutionary states.[4]

I don't have the space to detail these many interventions and the specific reasons for US decisions to mount them. Instead, I will focus on the Vietnam War as reflective of a broader US concern about the spread of communism in the third world and, with it, the political and geopolitical expansion of Soviet global power.

Vietnam

In Vietnam, as in many other parts of the third world—with the exception of Cuba after the 1959 revolution and Chile between 1970 and 1973—US economic interests were rather marginal; in most cases, revolutionary seizures of power in third world nations did not tend to result in major setbacks for the direct national economic interests of the United States. Further, and as highlighted by the Cold War realists mentioned earlier, many such countries and regions were not regarded—at least by some high-profile realist thinkers (Morgenthau 1969)—as being of strategic interest to the United States.

Thus, while the Korean War could be seen as reflecting a geopolitical challenge to the United States, for some realists, at least, this was less the case with Vietnam and the many other US interventions in the third world. How, then, do we explain the US intervention in Vietnam and what does this tell us about American foreign policy towards the third world (and revolutionary political change) more generally throughout the Cold War? To address this question we have to look at the actual steps leading up to the intervention—a basic narrative of events—and then assess the reasons for the intervention and the role of different factors and explanations.

In the case of Vietnam, US intervention proceeded in a step-by-step fashion conditioned by developments on the ground in Vietnam, by the wider regional and global context of the Cold War, and, finally, by the complexion of political opinion within the United States. As I have already mentioned, the initial US intervention—in support of the French between 1950 and 1954—was largely determined by the wider regional context of war and communist expansion

across geographical borders. It was this that gave rise to the idea of the 'domino theory', which predicted that those countries neighbouring a newly-created revolutionary or communist state would become 'infected' with the 'communist contagion' and would fall over like dominoes—becoming communist. Hence the importance of countries such as (South) Vietnam and South Korea, which were seen as being in the front line in the struggle to contain the spread of communism.

With the departure of the French and the division of Vietnam into a communist North and anti-communist South in 1954, the US picked up where the French had left off in providing the financial and military support for the construction of an independent South Vietnamese state. In this sense the US was following the pattern established in Korea—a divided peninsula after the 1953 armistice—with the US committed to supporting the construction of a strong pro-Western and capitalist regime in the South. From this point on, with the US having made a political commitment to the future of South Vietnam, the flow, implementation, and success of US policy became dependent on its relationship with its local ally and the social and political forces associated with the South Vietnamese ruling elite.

In a similar fashion to its relationship with the Chinese Kuomintang over the 1945–9 period, between 1954 and 1973 US policy was concerned not only with addressing the escalating communist political and military threat—especially after 1960, when the communist-led National Liberation Front (NLF) launched its struggle in the South—but also with getting its local ally to pursue policies that the US favoured and regarded as the best way of constructing a stable and credible non-communist state in the South.

With the launching of the NLF offensive in 1960 (after the Saigon regime had arrested, tortured, and assassinated thousands of communists and suspected communists in the South in the preceding months) the US commitment to Vietnam became increasingly militarized, resulting in a steady increase in the number of US troops and advisers dispatched to Vietnam.[5] The key point here is that it was the actions of the Saigon government that triggered the upsurge in guerrilla activity in the South, and it was to be this dynamic—the policies and failures of the South Vietnamese—that would effectively drive US policy on the ground. This was particularly so as the Saigon regime, characterized by military ineptitude and political and economic incompetence and corruption, quickly showed itself to be unable to effectively deal with the NLF offensive, and its economic and agrarian policies—in spite of US advice and pressure for reform—actually aggravated the political and security situation in the countryside.

Faced with this situation as 1965 approached, and as US troop numbers and involvement increased (along with casualty figures), the US had two options. First, it could withdraw and leave Saigon to deal with the communist threat, with the likelihood that it would probably fail and the South would go communist. Such an outcome would have had dramatic consequences for US standing in the world, calling into question the will of the US to meet communist threats, potentially undermining the regional security of other US allies in the region, and casting doubt on the effectiveness of US policy. The US's second option in Vietnam was to become much more involved, effectively taking over responsibility for directing the war in the countryside against the NLF.[6] Such a dilemma has confronted the US leadership in other scenarios where it has launched military interventions, including the most recent cases in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. In these two cases the concern wasn't over how a 'precipitous withdrawal' of military sources might have resulted in a communist victory but rather civil war and the disintegration of the state in the case of Iraq, and a return to power of the Taliban Islamist militia in Afghanistan.

In Vietnam the US chose the second option. As in the case of those other key moments in modern US history where the US has decided to take on a much bigger military commitment likely to have a significant impact on US domestic politics, a *casus belli*—an 'unprovoked' act of aggression on the US or its forces—would be used to convince the American public of the need to take on a military burden involving the dispatch of large numbers of troops overseas to fight (as in the cases of the bombing of Pearl Harbour and the invasion of South Korea, and later the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington, DC).

This *casus belli* was 'provided' bu the 'Gulf of Tonkin incident', where US ships were supposedly[7] attacked by North Vietnamese forces. This apparent 'act of aggression' highlighting the involvement of the North in the war in the South provided the basis for the infamous 'blank check' granted by Congress—the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution—to the Johnson administration to intensify the war by increasing the numbers of US troops in South Vietnam (reaching a peak of just under half a million in 1968) and by launching bombing raids—Operation Rolling Thunder—on the North.

After 1965, then, the US became involved in a drawn-out and bloody war in the jungles of Southeast Asia, propping up an autocratic, ineffective, and corrupt state. In spite of the huge and horrific levels of bombs (and chemical weapons) dropped on the peoples of Vietnam, along with killing far more Vietnamese than the combined communist forces were able to kill US troops, the US failed to deliver the knock-out blow to win the war. Instead, as the war was prolonged and particularly after the political debacle and humiliation of the 1968 NLF Tet Offensive, when NLF guerrillas seized control of the US embassy in Saigon, American domestic politics began to play a much more important role in determining US policy as the campaign for withdrawal gathered pace in the US.

Although the anti-war movement did not force the US to withdraw, it played a key role in ending the policy established under Johnson after 1965, highlighting, again, the importance of domestic political opinion on US foreign policy. With the election of Richard Nixon in late 1968, US policy changed as it sought an exit from Vietnam.

Although the US commitment to Vietnam was singular, what does the US experience in and with Vietnam suggest about American foreign policy towards the third world more generally? As recognized by the Cold War realists, US involvement was not—primarily—driven by geopolitical concerns. However, although Vietnam and the many other sites of US intervention were not—in themselves—of geopolitical significance, whether or not communist expansion took place within them was.

Although not in all cases, in enough, revolutionaries (not just communists) coming to power did tend to open up avenues for the expansion of Soviet influence and power, and this expansion of communist and Soviet influence did tend to have an impact on wider regional international relations and the security of neighbouring states. This is not to suggest that the 'domino theory' was to be borne out in Southeast Asia after the 1975 communist victory in Vietnam, but it does suggest that revolutions had international repercussions that had an impact on the international and domestic politics of neighbouring states even if they did not succumb to revolution.[8]

The international and geopolitical consequences of revolutionary change was most evident in developments in Cuba after the 1959 revolution, which led into the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. After the failure of the US-sponsored 'Bay of Pigs' invasion of Cuba in April 1961, Moscow attempted to defend Cuba from further US intervention and alter the strategic balance of power by deploying nuclear missiles in Cuba. While we might argue that Cuba's openness to Moscow only occurred because of US hostility to revolutionary change, we still have to recognize the very different and antagonistic domestic and foreign policy priorities of most, if not all, revolutionary states during the Cold War with respect to US priorities and interests.

The threat of revolution, then, could be seen in geopolitical terms. However, US responses to revolutionary change were also a product of the prevailing anti-communist ideational mindset within the US national security bureaucracy, which also pervaded wider US society. Simply put, most, if not all, revolutionary changes tended to be seen as communist-inspired or—in one way or another—as involving Moscow (Barnet 1972). This was obviously not the case, as revolutionary change carried out by nationalist movements—mainly against European colonial powers—in the third world was a product of very local political and economic developments with little or nothing to do with Moscow. On one level, then, we could see the struggles of nationalist movements for political and economic independence in the third world as being separate from the Cold War. This highlights a further layer of complexity in surveying American foreign policy, as US policy was concerned not only with the USSR and other communist states, but also with thwarting the domestic and international ambitions of a number of third-world states not because they were communist, but because they refused to accept or involve themselves in American-constructed international security and economic frameworks.

KEY POINTS

- Initial US intervention in Vietnam (Indochina) between 1950 and 1954 was conditioned by wider regional developments—the Chinese Revolution and the Korean War—and by the formation of NATO.
- The 'domino theory', which predicted that states surrounding a newly created communist state would become 'infected' with communism and at risk of communist subversion, was influential in the development of US policy towards Vietnam.

- After 1954 the USA committed itself to building a stable anti-communist state in South Vietnam, the success of which was dependent on its relations with local political forces in South Vietnam.
- US military involvement in South Vietnam increased after 1960 in response to the failure of the South Vietnamese government to deal effectively with the NLF (communist) offensive. By the mid-1960s the US faced a dilemma: to pull out of Vietnam and see a likely communist victory or to become more involved, effectively running the war.
- The Gulf of Tonkin incident in 1965 was significant in justifying the escalation of US military involvement in Vietnam.
- The prolonging of the war and the humiliation caused by the NLF's 1968 Tet Offensive meant that American domestic politics became much more influential on American policy, leading to the eventual withdrawal of US troops by 1973.
- The significance of revolutionary change in the third world is that it opened up avenues for the expansion of Soviet geopolitical power, and that new revolutionary regimes threatened to undermine the political stability of neighbouring states.
- The geopolitical consequences of revolutionary change were most evident in the way the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis developed out of the 1959 Cuban Revolution.

Ending the Cold War

The discussion of the role of American foreign policy in the ending of the Cold War has focused on the policies of the Reagan administration and, in particular, the claims by some scholars (Schweizer 2003) and by former members (Weinberger 1990) of the Reagan administration that 'Reagan won the Cold War'. The claim, then, is that Reagan's arms build-up and policy of confronting the USSR and its allies in the third world (after a spate of revolutions during the 1970s that saw an expansion of Soviet power) by supporting anti-communist guerrilla movements forced the USSR into making strategic and political concessions that effectively ended the Cold War between 1987 and 1989. So, did Reagan's policies of confrontation force Soviet concessions, effectively ending the Cold War?

In assessing the impact of Reagan's policies, most scholars tend to highlight the differences between his first and second terms in office. While the first term was characterized by an aggressive and confrontational stance towards the USSR, the second term—in part reflected in the turnover in key personnel and a more assertive Congress—saw a gradual shift away from confrontation and, with Gorbachev's accession to the Soviet leadership in 1985, an opening to negotiations with Moscow.

In terms of timing, then, Reagan's policies did *not* force Soviet concessions: the developments that realized the end of the Cold War confrontation emerged out of a rather different political and geopolitical context. Further, for as long as the US kept the pressure on, Moscow continued to—in the main—meet its international commitments and, moreover, did not move towards making concessions to the US (Halliday 1994; Saull 2007: 165–79). This was the case even in the early stages of the Gorbachev leadership during 1985–6.

We do not know what might have happened had the second-term Reagan administration continued with the hard-line policies of the first term, but the reduction of international tensions certainly made it easier for Gorbachev to usher in the changes that he made in Soviet foreign and domestic policies,[9] which broke the geopolitical and ideological framework that had dominated US–Soviet relations since 1945. Further, it was only in this altered and more benign geopolitical context that the Soviet leadership could tolerate the developments in east-central Europe in 1989, which saw the collapse of communist power within these states and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact.

However, in recognizing the paradoxical role played by Reagan's policies in ending the Cold War we also need to take stock of the longer-term consequences of US geopolitical hostility towards the USSR and the economic burdens that this placed on the USSR. Thus, while the Reagan doctrine may not have forced the USSR to end the Cold War, the longer-term impact of US policy towards the USSR and international revolution, more generally, imposed huge burdens that could only undermine the domestic political and economic legitimacy of the USSR and its allied regimes. This bore out Kennan's recommendation and prognosis in the 'The Sources of Soviet Conduct' (1947; Key quotes 6.1) that the US should contain Soviet power until the domestic problems within the USSR forced political change particularly through the way in which economic resources were channelled towards maintaining the military-geopolitical balance

with the US. In this regard, the wider international capitalist socio-economic dimensions of US power and the way in which the US took advantage of economic resources beyond the national economic space of the United States proved to be a defining factor in the long-term struggle with the USSR.

The ending of the Cold War and particularly its rapid and relatively peaceful conclusion re-opened historiographical debates. For John Lewis Gaddis, the timing and nature of its end helped provoke his assault on international relations theory (1992/93) and its seeming inability to expect, let alone predict, such an outcome.[10] More broadly, the Cold War's end refocused attention on the role of ideas, as opposed to geopolitical or material interests, in the American conduct of the Cold War; the question of who was ultimately responsible for it; and also the role of personality in determining foreign policy decisions. Finally, the opening of Soviet-bloc archives has allowed diplomatic historians to better assess and understand Soviet decision making throughout the history of the Cold War, which has led to a revaluation not only of the bases of Soviet policy (see Westad 2000) but of the bases of United States policy as well.

KEY POINTS

- Analysis of the role of American foreign policy in the ending of the Cold War has focused on the claims by some scholars and former members of the Reagan administration that Reagan's hard-line policies forced the USSR into making concessions that ended the Cold War.
- Most scholars highlight the differences between the first and second terms of the Reagan presidency. While the first term was dominated by confronting the USSR in the third world and imposing an economic burden on Moscow through a massive arms build-up, the second term saw Reagan move towards negotiations with Moscow.
- Historical evidence suggests that Reagan's hard-line policies had little impact on changing Soviet behaviour during his first term.
- It was the changed circumstances (and policies) of Reagan's second term that made Gorbachev more willing and able to implement his reform programme, which ended with the collapse of communist power and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact.
- While Reagan's hard-line policies may not have 'won' the Cold War, the long-term costs imposed on the USSR by containment played a very important role—as predicted by Kennan—in undermining the political and economic legitimacy of communist rule in the USSR and east-central Europe.

Conclusions

This chapter has provided a historical survey of American foreign policy during the Cold War, covering a number of major developments and changes in US policy. It has sought to account for US policy by drawing on and evaluating contrasting theoretical arguments that stress the role of geopolitical, ideational, and/or socio-economic factors on US foreign policy. The chapter has demonstrated the explanatory uses and limitations of each approach. Its main conclusions are that the making of US foreign policy during the Cold War was centred on the how external developments involving the USSR and other revolutionary states, and changes in the international capitalist economy, were mediated through the institutions of the US state and domestic political debates involving the American people and their political representatives.

In this sense the realm of domestic politics and the prevailing ideational and ideological currents within state institutions and wider society were crucial in determining the US response to geopolitical changes and challenges and in responding to changes in the international capitalist economy. Further, the chapter has tried to expand our intellectual gaze beyond the traditional focus on US diplomatic and inter-state relations by highlighting the connections between geopolitics and international economic relations.

US foreign policy then and now has been preoccupied with these two concerns—geopolitical and socio-economic—and in this regard the re-ordering of the international economy after the Second World War based on US leadership and a US model of political economy could be seen, now that the Cold War has ended, as *the* transformation in world politics after the Second World War. The interesting point for the future of US global power is that the Cold War was integral to those post-war international economic arrangements.

QUESTIONS

1. In what ways did domestic political developments influence American foreign policy during the Cold War?
2. Critically assess the orthodox–revisionist debate on the origins of the Cold War. Which account do you find more convincing and why?
3. 'Throughout the history of the Cold War the United States used and manipulated the Soviet threat to secure its leadership over the Western world'. Discuss.
4. How useful is the concept of imperialism in explaining American foreign relations during the Cold War?
5. Why did the United States intervene in Vietnam? Why was it unable to overcome communist forces?
6. 'American policy toward developing world revolutions was as much about misperception as it was about confronting communist expansion'. Discuss.
7. To what extent was US foreign economic policy of a case of 'containment by other means'?
8. Did the US cause the 'new' Cold War?
9. Did Reagan 'win' the Cold War?
10. What impact did the end of the Cold War have on American foreign policy?

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ENDNOTES

1. The situation in Chile between 1971 and 1973 and the US support for the military coup that overthrew the democratically-elected Allende government in September 1973 brought out such analytical tensions. One response to

this that reflected a neo-conservative rather than a liberal justification was provided by Jeanne Kirkpatrick (1982), who defended the coup and outlined an argument that made a distinction between right-wing and revolutionary or communist dictatorships, seeing, in some cases, the necessity for the former.

2. Such arguments also had analytical purchase in accounting for international economic relations within the Western bloc as highlighted in the collapse of the post-war Bretton Woods system with the ending of the fixed gold-dollar exchange rate in the early 1970s, a shift by the Nixon administration towards protectionism, and the subsequent frictions and crises across a number of Western economies during the 1970s.
3. Prior to this the US had shown itself committed to using force—through numerous interventions—against revolutionary movements and states in the western hemisphere in the early decades of the twentieth century: see Horowitz (1969); Gandin (2006).
4. Many of which formed the basis of presidential national security doctrines throughout the Cold War.
5. Between 1961 and 1962 the number of US military personnel in South Vietnam more than tripled from 3,000 to 11,000, increasing to over 16,000 in 1963 and more than 23,000 before the formal introduction of combat troops in March 1965. By the end of 1965 there were 184,000 US military personnel in South Vietnam. See Young (1991: 332–3).
6. See Saull (2001: 189–99; 2007: 109–12, 120–7): for a detailed analysis of US policy in Vietnam.
7. An alternative view is provided by in the 'Pentagon Papers', which state that the US deliberately provoked the North Vietnamese attack on the two US vessels—the *Maddox* and *Turner Joy*. See Sheehan (1971) and Prados (2004).
8. This was evident in Indonesia in the mid-1960s with the growing power of the Indonesian Communist Party. The result was a pre-emptive counter-revolutionary *coup d'état* by right-wing and pro-American elements within the armed forces—led by General Suharto—that overthrew the radical nationalist government in 1966, ushering in the massacre of tens of thousands of communists and other leftists by the military regime over the following months.
9. Some scholars emphasize the growing crisis with the Soviet economy as the key driver of Gorbachev's decisions, suggesting that not only were international factors of secondary importance in explaining Soviet behaviour but that significant change to the USSR's international orientation was almost inevitable given the longer-term failings and weaknesses of the Soviet economy (see Kuznetsov 1997).
10. Gaddis's intervention reflected a wider onslaught on the dominance of the neo-realist theoretical framework in the discipline of international relations, with rival theoretical frameworks informed by domestic-level and ideational and social-constructivist positions, claiming to offering arguably better explanations of the end of the Cold War and, with it, a better understanding of American foreign policy (see Lebow and Risse-Kappen, 1995).

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7

America in the 1990s: searching for purpose

John Dumbrell

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Introduction: A new world

Speaking as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under President George H. W. Bush, General Colin Powell told the US Senate Armed Services Committee in September 1991: 'We have seen our implacable enemy of forty years vaporize before our eyes' (Beschloss and Talbott 1993: 48). The giddying pace of Soviet collapse after 1989 and the consequent termination of the Cold War called into question pre-existing theories and understandings of how the US does, and should, interact with the world. Different branches of the social sciences had previously preoccupied themselves with explaining the persistence of global structures, including the structure of the 'Cold War system', rather than with analysing possible reasons for systemic collapse. For some, the peaceful conclusion of the Cold War, including the unexpectedly voluntary 'vaporization' of the Soviet threat, posed potentially insoluble problems for realist theory. At the very least, those explanations of US foreign policy which accepted the primacy of global systemic pressures had to adapt to a world of transformed global relations. The combination of a world without credible geopolitical rivals to the US and an international economic (and to some degree political) order characterized by accelerating globalized integration turned many conventional understandings of international engagement on their heads.

If the external environment of US foreign policy shifted radically in the 1990s, internal pressures on policy makers shifted in tandem. These were years of excitement, hope, and

the articulation of new fears. Derek Chollet and John Goldgeier (2008: xiv) likened the period between the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) and the terrorist attacks on the US of 11 September 2001—an era which we might call the 'long 1990s'—to the years between the two world wars of the twentieth century, when 'with no common threat to unite them, Americans couldn't come together to define the national interest'. Without obvious security threats, economic concerns came to the surface. As Norman Ornstein (1994: 114) wrote: 'Geoeconomics increasingly drives geopolitics, compared to a Cold War agenda where geopolitics drove economics'. In the 1990s, economic foreign policy constituted a kind of operational cutting edge, providing purpose and coherence to wider strategies of US international engagement. Long-standing arguments about the relationship between ideals and interests in US foreign policy were transformed in the post-Soviet environment, usually in the context of debates about possible military interventions to promote humanitarian ends. New agendas centred on what the Bill Clinton administration came to define as 'borderless threats', including environmental problems and the rise and transmogrification of international terrorism. In all these arenas, elite and public opinion struggled to keep pace with rapid global change.

At the global level, the 'long 1990s' were years of intense democratic possibility. Yet, from Rwanda to Bosnia, they were also years of atavistic negativity and irrationality. How should the US respond to a world which was apparently both rapidly integrating and rapidly disintegrating? Was it inevitable, desirable, or even possible that the US should provide global leadership? This chapter will discuss various approaches to these questions. It reviews the wider international environment of apparent unipolarity and globalization, before considering internal debates about these questions. The more detailed development of foreign policy under presidents George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton will then be examined (see Table 7.1 for a chronology).

Unipolarity and galloping globalization

An early post–Cold War article by Charles Krauthammer (1990/91) caused the term 'unipolarity', as a descriptor of the US-dominated post–Cold War system, to be taken up by journalists and commentators, rather than remaining confined to the walls of academic realist theory. For Krauthammer, the US in the 1990s was faced by a 'unipolar moment'—an opportunity to turn the unexpected collapse of the Soviet Union into a more lasting period of benign global domination by the United States. Krauthammer seemed to see the 'moment' as lasting for quite some time, but certainly did not see it as everlasting (at least, not unless the US grasped the unprecedented opportunities for cementing its power). Ten years or so later, Krauthammer (2001) was bemoaning the lost opportunities of 'a decade of playing pygmy', but still saw the world as unipolar. In such discussions, both journalistic and academic 'unipolarity' was contrasted with 'bipolarity' (a system dominated by two great powers) and 'multipolarity' (a system dominated by three or more). Within the realist tradition, disputes emerged both as to whether world power distribution *was* unipolar and whether or not unipolarity was a stable system. For Glenn H. Snyder (1997: 18), the system bequeathed by the Cold War was actually 'incipiently multipolar'. Some realists (usually identified as 'defensive realists') argued that other states were bound to seek to counterbalance against the dominant systemic actor (in this case, of course, the United States), especially if the US yielded to the 'imperial temptation' to overpay its unipolar hand. Others countered that no single state could realistically seek to rival the US, and that the practical difficulties faced by alliances of states in seeking to 'balance' against the US effectively negated the threat to long-term American domination (see Walt 2003; Tucker and Hendrickson 1992). William Wohlforth, on the other hand, argued that 'counterhegemonic' alliances face massive problems of alliance coordination and the maintenance of mutual trust. For Wohlforth (1999: 41), the only real threat to American dominance came from what he called the 'live-for-today nature of US domestic institutions'. Domestic pressures—*Innenpolitik*—had the potential to disrupt rational policy making by causing policy makers to replace responsible internationalism with a narrow 'America first' abandonment of global leadership. Other realist writers tended to argue that future threats were likely to come not so much from counterhegemonic alliances as from traditional bearers of state power—notably China, the economically modernizing communist country whose political and military structures had survived the upheavals of 1989–90 more or less intact (Mearsheimer 2001).

Table 7.1 Chronology of key events, 1989–2000

1989	January	Inauguration of President George H. W. Bush
	June	Tiananmen Square massacre in Beijing
	November	Fall of Berlin Wall
	December	Bush–Gorbachev Malta summit US invasion of Panama
1990	May–June	Bush–Gorbachev summit in Washington and Camp David Superpower agreement on reunification of Germany
	August	Iraq invades Kuwait
	September	Bush's 'New World Order' speech
	November	European conventional force levels treaty signed
1991	January	Congressional Gulf War debate
	January–February	Operation Desert Storm: liberation of Kuwait
	July	First START (superpower Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) signed
	August	Failed coup in Moscow Soviet parliament bans Communist Party
	December	USSR replaced by Commonwealth of Independent States
1992	June	Washington summit: Russia recognized as 'successor state' to USSR
	December	Operation Restore Hope begins in Somalia
1993	January	Inauguration of President Bill Clinton
	June	Air assault on Iraq
	September	Oslo Declaration of Principles on Middle East peace
	October	18 US military personnel killed in Somalia
	November	NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) approved by US Congress
1994	April	US forces leave Somalia
	May	Presidential Decision Directive 25
	September	US invasion of Haiti
	October	North Korean nuclear agreement
1995	January	Republicans assume leadership of both houses of US Congress US rescue operation for Mexican peso
	July–August	Congress votes to lift arms embargo on Bosnian government
	August	US diplomatic initiative in Bosnia
	November	Dayton Peace Accords agreed
1996	November	Clinton re-elected
1997	May	NATO–Russia Founding Act signed
	November	Congress denies executive 'fast track' trade negotiating authority
1998	April	Good Friday (Belfast) Peace Agreement signed
	August	Missile attacks on Sudan and Afghanistan
	December	US–UK air strikes on Iraq
1999	March	NATO air strikes on Serbia begin
	April	NATO fiftieth anniversary summit: formal admission of Poland, Hungary, and Czech Republic
	October	US Senate fails to ratify Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty
2000	July	Israel–Palestine peace talks begin at Camp David
	November	George W. Bush wins presidential election

America's unipolarity

It is worth taking a moment to reflect upon how exactly it was that the United States was regarded as so uniquely powerful during these years. By the early years of the twenty-first century, even former proponents of the theory of post–Vietnam War US international decline had fallen into line behind the notion of 'unipolarity'. Paul Kennedy, author of *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (1987), wrote shortly after 9/11: 'Nothing has ever existed like this disparity of power: nothing' (cited in Brands 2016: 338). It was not simply a matter of the vaporization of the USSR. Focusing on the decline of 'Fordism' (the industrial system of automated mass production), theorists of post-1968 US decline had tended to underplay America's lead role in developing new technologies. However, economic indicators during the Clinton presidency told their own story. Unemployment in the US dropped from 7.3 per cent in 1993 to 4.3 per cent in 1999. The American economy, traditionally dependent on domestic demand, began to show important signs of export growth. Despite post–Cold War cutbacks, US military spending in the late 1990s amounted to around one-third of global military spending (CFR report, July 2014). The various military and diplomatic alliances that the US had forged during the Cold War acted, in Hal Brands' phrase, as 'force multipliers' for the projection of American power (Brands 2016: 339). Perhaps above all, America stood in the 1990s as the bearer (in the term coined by Joseph Nye, 2004) of formidable 'soft power'—cultural and intellectual. The liberal idea—free markets and democratic capitalist political systems—seemed the way of the future. Unipolarity, of course, was not without its problems. Francis Fukuyama's celebration of the 'end of history', as encapsulated in the triumph of the liberal idea, drew forth understandable accusations of naivety and over-elaboration (Fukuyama 1989; Fukuyama 1992; see Major debates and their impact 7.1). The US rise to global ascendancy had its share of 'blowback', ranging from a festering European anti-Americanism to a newly energized and violent Islamic extremism (Johnson 2000). However, if we define 'unipolarity' as a combination of symmetrical threat and undisputed global primacy across economic, military, and 'soft' dimensions of power, the decade of the 1990s was indeed a unipolar moment.

Globalization

Unipolarity in the 1990s was also closely bound up with economic globalization and with America's role as its effective sponsor. Many commentators in the 1990s saw economic globalization as just one aspect of an integrating post–Cold War world. Economic integration was thus linked to the computer-led communications revolution, global American 'soft power', the growth of tourism, and the proliferation of international organizations as aspects of a shrinking world. Sociologist Roland Robertson pointed to 'the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole' (Robertson 1992: 8). The US enjoyed a uniquely hegemonic position in the increasingly open global financial system (Helleiner 1994). The Ford Motor Company—the very symbol of American economic power in earlier years of the century—had by the 1990s transformed itself into a hyper-integrated global production and management structure. Analysts of 1990s globalization disagreed as to the extent to which the relative openness of the international financial system was replicated elsewhere in the global economy. They also disagreed over the degree to which national governments, even the US government, had the ability to control the pace and even the effects of economic globalization (Hirst and Thompson 1996; Strange 1995). At the level of international relations theory, apparently galloping globalization called into question those understandings of the world, including most realist theory, which used the nation state as the prime unit of analysis (Hay 2016). The academic sub-field of international political economy, with its implicit undertaking to study the mutual and complex intersection of states and markets, gained in popularity.

From the perspective of evolving US foreign policy, globalization (especially economic globalization) represented both an aspect of American power and a phenomenon over which political leaders in Washington DC struggled to maintain influence. Benjamin Barber saw the US as an increasingly uncertain leader of an integrating 'McWorld' in which Washington confronted not only the power of semi-autonomous globalized private corporations, but also reviving forces of ethnic fragmentation and local nationalisms (Barber 1995; Barber 2001: 64). Populist movements in Latin America in particular began to articulate public grievances against US-sponsored economic globalization and against the free trade, neoliberal 'Washington consensus'. The domestic overspill of economic globalization threatened to open up gaps between elite support for internationalism and a public that was preoccupied with domestic issues (Steel 1995: 85).

KEY POINTS

- The global order of the 1990s plausibly appeared as one of US-dominated unipolairity.
- Unipolarity was intimately connected with US-sponsored (especially economic) globalization.
- Both unipolarity and globalization stimulated resistance.

Searching for purpose in the George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton administrations: the 'Kennan sweepstakes'

Beginning in the late 1980s, the American foreign policy community was exposed to a sometimes bewildering and prolonged national meditation on possible options for an America without a Soviet threat. During the first year of Clinton's presidency, the debate became known in administration circles as the 'Kennan sweepstakes': a conscious effort to find a post-Soviet statement of purpose to rival George Kennan's early Cold War concept of 'containment' of communism (Brinkley 1997; Dumbrell 2009: 41–5). Commentators and policy practitioners began to develop the notion of the 'democratic peace'—broadly, the notion that democracies do not go to war with each other, an idea derived from Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant which was to have a profound influence on the foreign policy thinking of the Clinton administration (Russett 1993; Doyle 1995; see Major debates and their impact 7.1). With liberal democracy apparently on the march, from Eastern Europe to Latin American and South Africa, hope was in the air. The range of options for US foreign policy on offer in the early 1990s was conveniently arranged along a spectrum leading from strong internationalist assertion (to the point of actual imperialism) at one end, to contractionism (to the point of isolationism) at the other (Crabb, Sarieddine, and Antizzo 2001). The major fear in elite discourse was that of a new isolationism. With the Soviet threat extinguished at last, perhaps America really was homeward bound? Our two post–Cold War presidents—George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton—took on the task of constructing a persuasive rhetorical defence of American internationalism.

MAJOR DEBATES AND THEIR IMPACT 7.1: THE 'END OF HISTORY' AND THE 'DEMOCRATIC PEACE'

'End of history'

What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.

(Fukuyama 1989)

Fukuyama predicted the end of ideological conflicts, not history itself, and the triumph of political and economic liberalism. That point is correct in a narrow sense: the secular religions that fought each other so bloodily in the last century are now dead. But Fukuyama failed to note that nationalism remains very much alive. Moreover, he ignored the explosive potential of religious wars that has extended to a large part of the Islamic world.

(Hoffman 2002)

The 'democratic peace'

The end of ideological hostility matters doubly because it represents a surrender to the force of Western values of economic and especially political freedom. To the degree that countries once ruled by autocratic systems become democratic, a striking fact about the world comes to bear on any discussion of the future of international relations: in the modern international system, democracies have almost never fought each other.

(Russett 1993)

[In the Clinton years] Immanuel Kant, the best-known author of the 'democratic peace' theory, was no longer buried in Konigsberg but alive and well and on the seventh floor of the State Department.

(Joffe 2006)

Just as neighbors who raise each others' barns are less likely to become arsonists, people who raise each others' living standards through commerce are less likely to become combatants.

(Bill Clinton, American University speech, February 1993)

George H. W. Bush

President George H. W. Bush was actually an unlikely post–Cold War visionary. He famously denied any skill with 'the vision thing'. In the frenetic immediate post–Cold War climate, he was not short of advice. Former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara (1989) urged him to cut defence spending by 50 per cent. At the other extreme, the 1992 Defense Planning Guidance, written in his Department of Defense and leaked to the press in April 1992, reflected neo-conservative thinking. It envisaged an America which would enjoy permanent and unremitting military primacy.

KEY QUOTES 7.1: THE NEW WORLD ORDER

Out of these troubled times … a new world order can emerge … Today, that new world order is struggling to be born, a world quite different from the one we have known, a world where the rule of law supplants the rule of the jungle, a world in which nations recognize the shared responsibility for freedom and justice, a world where the strong respect the weak.

(President George H. W. Bush, Address before a Joint Session of the Congress, 11 September 1990)

… the rich men of the rich societies are to rule the world … assisted by the rich men of the hungry nations who do their bidding.

(Noam Chomsky, World Orders, Old and New— Chomsky 1994: 5)

Using military force makes sense as a policy where the stakes warrant, where and when force can be effective, where no other policies are likely to prove effective, where its application can be limited in scope and time, and where the potential benefits justify the potential costs and sacrifice.

(President George H. W. Bush, Remarks at the United States Military Academy at West Point, 5 January 1993)

President George H. W. Bush's main contribution to post–Cold War role setting was the concept of a New World Order (see Key quotes 7.1), outlined to Congress following the 1990 invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein's Iraqi army. Although it contained a general commitment to democratic idealism, the New World Order was far from an American-led campaign for global democracy. Bush saw the Cold War as having been won through a combination of democratic assertion—an unapologetic defence of democracy and free markets—along with an unwillingness to appease dictators and a pragmatic caution about the dangers of inciting global war. The collapse of communism provided the opportunity at last to make good on the internationalist vision which had emerged after 1945 and which had long been tempered by the need to respect the raw power of America's communist foes. As Jeffrey Engel (2010: 29) argues, Bush's vision of a New World Order was essentially the vision of all US leaders 'determined to place America at the head of a world system considered in Washington's best interests, and, in their eyes, in the world's best interests as well'. The New World Order nonetheless represented a brand of 1990s internationalism which was closely attuned to a keen awareness of the limits of American power. Following the 1991 victory in the Gulf against Iraq, Bush famously, and rather prematurely, boasted of having buried the 'specter of Vietnam' in 'the desert sands of the Arabian peninsula' (Tucker and Hendrickson 1992: 72). Yet, just as the New World Order was no unabashed call to arms, Bush's farewell speeches at the close of his presidency emphasized constraints as well as opportunities. At West Point military academy in January 1993, Bush rhetorically reserved the use of force for occasions 'where its application can be limited in space and time, and where the potential benefits justify the potential costs and sacrifice' (*Public Papers* 1993: 2229).

KEY POINTS

- The New World Order was President Bush Sr.'s main contribution to thinking beyond the Cold War.
- Bush's concept combined awareness of constraints on American power, as well as opportunities for exercising it.

Bill Clinton

Bill Clinton's 1992 presidential campaign was dominated by domestic issues; indeed, a major Clinton

criticism of Bush was that the latter had become excessively oriented towards foreign policy. By the time Clinton entered the White House, however, it was clear not only that an entry had to be found for the 'Kennan sweepstakes', but that Bush's New World Order had to be recast. Clinton was now looking for a vision that combined a commitment to geo-economics, an awareness of limits, and moral purpose. The key task was to delineate the conditions for engagement, whether military or diplomatic. Various administration spokespeople advanced notions of 'assertive humanitarianism'. As they developed in the early phase of Clinton's presidency, the 'tests' or conditions for engagement seemed to centre on the domestic overspill from regional conflict, alliance obligations, and demonstrable US economic interest.

The administration's prize entry in the 'Kennan sweepstakes' was 'democratic enlargement', defended and defined by National Security Adviser Tony Lake in September 1993. Lake made it clear that 'democratic enlargement' had economics at its heart. The replacement for anti-communist containment would be 'a strategy of enlargement ... of the world's free community of market democracies' (Brinkley 1997: 116; Boys 2015). 'Democratic enlargement' never gained wide currency as a slogan, and was superseded in later declarations of purpose by the formula 'engagement and enlargement'. Yet 'democratic enlargement' did capture what was to become the central, integrating purpose of the Clinton foreign policy: to position the USA at the head of economic globalization.

As it developed in the mid- and late 1990s, the Clinton administration's 'big thinking' on post–Cold War foreign policy reflected both a new confidence and a new caution. Confidence derived from the retreat of declinism. By mid-decade, the computer revolution, growth in global free trade, and the US consumer spending boom had transformed the recessionary economic climate which had affected the election of 1992. Yet setbacks on the ground in Somalia, following Bush's military intervention there after the 1992 election, raised doubts about the future of 'assertive humanitarianism'. From January 1995, Clinton had to share power with a Republican Congressional majority which was contemptuous of anything resembling naive altruism in foreign policy. One expression of the post-Somalia mood was Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 25, drafted in May 1994. The document laid out conditions for US participation in UN peacekeeping operations. Under PDD 25, the USA would contribute across its full range of capabilities, not just its 'unique' ones. However, US troops would support UN operations only if risks were 'acceptable' and objectives clear (Daalder 1996).

Administration thinking in the second Clinton term focused on the desired globalization of market democracy, a concept encapsulated in the Clintonite phrase 'family of nations'. Excluded from the family were 'rogue' or 'backlash' states, later dubbed 'states of concern' (see Key quotes 7.2). Such states included familiar international 'bad boys': Iraq, Iran, Cuba, North Korea, Libya. The post–Cold War 'democratic peace' was to be extended and protected by exposing and marginalizing the rogues (Lake 1994; Miles 2013: 26–53). Against Republican arguments that 'Americanism' and narrowly defined national interest should guide foreign policy, second-term Clintonites argued for the US role as 'indispensable nation'. For Clinton's second-term secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, the final decade of the twentieth century was 'the global era, a time characterized by heightened interdependence, overlapping national interests, and borders permeable to everything from terrorists and technology to disease and democratic ideals' (Albright 2003: 420). The USA would not and could not do everything; yet it could guide and shepherd the global progress towards market democracy. Democratic idealism was still part of the administration's conceptual apparatus in the second term. However, it was an idealism which had by this time been severely tested against the stubborn refusal of traditional security concerns to disappear, even in the era of post-communism.

KEY POINTS

- Clinton's post–Cold War vision shifted from 'democratic enlargement' to 'engagement and enlargement'.
- Clinton increasingly looked towards extending the sway of market democracy and to marginalizing 'rogue states'.

KEY QUOTES 7.2: THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION: GLOBALIZATION, DEMOCRACY PROMOTION, AND ROGUE STATES

With NAFTA, we'll be creating the biggest trading block in the world right at our doorstep, and led by the United States.

(President Bill Clinton, radio address, 18 October 1993)

.. our policy must face the reality of recalcitrant and outlaw states that not only choose to remain outside the family but also assault its basic values. There are few 'backlash states': Cuba, North Korea, Iran, Iraq, and Libya. For now they lack the resources of a superpower, which would enable them to seriously threaten the democratic order being created around them. Nevertheless, their behaviour is often aggressive and defiant. The ties between them are growing as they seek to thwart or quarantine themselves from a global trend to which they seem incapable of adapting.

(Lake 1994)

The world is no longer divided into two hostile camps. Instead, we are building bonds with nations that once were our adversaries. Growing connections of commerce and culture give us a chance to lift the fortunes and spirits of people the world over. And for the very first time in all of history, more people on this planet live under democracy than dictatorship.

(President Bill Clinton, Second Inaugural Address, 20 January 1997)

US foreign policy in the post–Cold War era

President George H. W. Bush, 1989–93

Despite the centrality of 'big thinking' in the 1990s, much foreign policy leadership remained as it had always been: the management of complex international interactions, especially in the context of more or less unexpected crises and emergencies. The practical efficiency of the Bush foreign policy team was impressive. George H. W. Bush's main concern in 1989–90 was how to manage the extraordinary, and largely unexpected, transformations that were taking place in Russia and Eastern Europe. The Bush team operated a closely structured National Security Council committee system, deferring always to the president. President Bush and his foreign policy elite were unenthused by the possibility of post–Cold War Congresses reasserting their foreign policy prerogatives. In general, they managed to keep any such resurgence at bay. The hallmarks of the Bush approach—seen, for example, in the context of managing German reunification—were elite-directed procedural deftness and restraint (Zelikow and Rice 1995; Hurst 1999; Bush and Scowcroft 1998). Bush's understanding of the contemporary international dynamics—the march of liberal democracy—gave him the confidence to take some risks. Yet the characteristic tenor of the administration was pragmatic and strategically cautious. Only occasionally did strategic caution come close to tumbling into stasis. The administration effectively stood aside from the developing chaos in the former Yugoslavia as the old Soviet-imposed security system disintegrated. Bush offered a process of 'testing' both Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev's good faith and his security in office. Washington sought also to integrate a reforming USSR into Western capitalist economic and political networks. The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe was greeted in official Washington with diplomatic equanimity, with Bush famously declining 'to dance on the Berlin Wall'.

The Bush policy, as it evolved between November 1989 and the extinction of the Soviet Union just over two years later, was one of attempting to bolster Gorbachev's domestic position where possible, but also of stopping well short of complete commitment to the Soviet reformer. There was to be no 'grand bargain', wherein Soviet reform might be underpinned by massive American aid. The unpredictability of Soviet politics was underlined by the failed anti-Gorbachev coup of August 1991. Bush supported Boris Yeltsin, the leader of the newly independent Russia, throughout 1992, although again with relatively little in the way of concrete aid. Although criticized for its hesitancy, Bush's Soviet/Russian policy had much to commend it. Two superpower strategic arms reduction treaties (START) were signed by early 1993. Above all, the huge shift in the geopolitical

landscape had been managed, at least beyond the immediate disorder in the former Yugoslavia, in a way broadly congruent with the White House's desire to avoid violent disintegration of the Soviet state system. Bush's pragmatic conservatism applied also to relations with China, with only muted criticism being offered following the 1989 massacre of student activists in Tiananmen Square, Beijing.

Bush's policy elsewhere was notably more incautious. In December 1989, the USA invaded Panama. The invasion followed the 'voiding' of elections by Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega. The White House offered a range of justifications for the action: 'to safeguard the lives of Americans, to defend democracy in Panama, to combat drug trafficking, and to protect the integrity of the Panama Canal' (Maechling 1990: 123). It was rather remarkable that this invasion, the first such use of military force in what were (just) post–Cold War conditions, had very little basis in international law (Fisher 1995: 145–8). Noriega, one-time US intelligence 'asset', had become a severe embarrassment to Washington. The invasion served as an indication of Washington's resolve to act decisively in the new international era, especially in its own hemisphere.

In contrast to the Panama action, the US response to Iraq's illegal August 1990 invasion of Kuwait was strongly backed by the United Nations. Saddam Hussein, like Noriega, was a former recipient of American aid who was now seen by Washington as an international menace. The US diplomatic and military response to the Kuwaiti invasion, Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, however, was multilateral and measured. As Freedman and Karsh (1994: 441) argued, the 1991 ouster of Iraq from Kuwait 'saw the return of the United States to a self-confident and an effective role at the heart of international affairs'. Bush's justification for action, centring on international law and on the threat the Iraqi action presented to oil supplies, was internationally persuasive. Controversy extended to the way in which mission goals shifted—variously explained as defending Saudi Arabia from attack, expelling the illegal invader, and at times even destroying the Iraqi regime. The US commitment noticeably expanded following the 1990 mid-term elections. The US attacks on virtually defenceless retreating Iraqi troops at the war's end were also highly controversial. Bush's reasons for allowing Saddam to remain in power—primarily concern for the integrity of the allied Gulf coalition and for the limited UN mandate, as well as the desire to avoid involvement in prolonged and unpredictable nation-building in Iraq—were coherent. However, the raising and subsequent disappointing of the hopes of the Shi'a population of southern Iraq, that the USA would intervene further in Iraq itself, profoundly damaged the prospects of a successful invasion by American troops in 2003.

The closing weeks of the presidency witnessed what was in some respects Bush's most incautious decision of all: the dispatch of 28,000 US troops to Somalia. The decision to commit troops to a region without significant immediate security interest for the US represented the New World Order in confident action. It reflected not only Bush's perception that post–Vietnam War restraints on US military action had now evaporated, but also the so-called 'CNN effect': the putative ability of media coverage of post–Cold War humanitarian disasters to shape Washington's agenda.

KEY POINTS

- Bush's management of the geopolitical convulsions which accompanied the end of the Cold War was generally sure-footed, if rather uninspired.
- The 1989 Panamanian invasion and the 1991 Gulf conflict were transformative assertions of post–Cold War US military force.

President Clinton's first term, 1993–7

Much of the early Clinton foreign policy agenda centred on issues inherited from the momentous Bush years: ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the USA, Canada, and Mexico; attempting to achieve a post–Cold War settlement with Russia; continuing Bush's moves towards a military posture appropriate for the new era; dealing with a deteriorating situation in Somalia; and developing a credible policy for the disintegrating Yugoslavia.

The November 1993 Congressional endorsement of NAFTA (234–200 in the House; 61–38 in the Senate) was a major victory for the President and for the principle of regional free trade. The NAFTA vote set the

foundation of a presidential record that was to be distinguished by its commitment to both bilateral and multilateral free trade policies. The administration set its sights on 'big emerging markets', including China, India, Brazil, and South Africa. The interpenetration of global security and economics was exemplified in the administration's policy of free trade with China, more or less without regard for Beijing's human rights record.

Policy towards Russia combined various elements, some of them mutually irreconcilable: a recognition of Boris Yeltsin as the only credible leader of the former superpower; a generalized commitment to Russian and East European democratization; the real need to control and decommission nuclear weapons in various parts of the old USSR; a concern to marginalize Russia as a future international security player; and the playing of a central role in the over-rapid marketization of the Russian economy (Talbott 2003; Marsden 2005). Policy towards Russia was also complicated by what was to become a major achievement of the Clinton administration: the expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe (Song 2016: 63–92). The result of these competing policy concerns was a stance towards Russia which continually risked provoking either a nationalist counter-reaction or a capitulation to the 'new oligarchs' who came to dominate the Russian economy. Regarding the post–Cold War military, Clinton continued the Bush dynamic of resetting capabilities. In 1993, it was announced that, by 1998, defence spending as a percentage of GNP would be less than half what it had been in the era of the Vietnam War. The US defence posture would be organized around the ability to fight two near-simultaneous major regional conflicts.

Clinton's early Balkans policy continued the Bush administration's unwillingness to accept the need for direct US involvement in what Secretary of State Warren Christopher called in 1993 a 'European situation' (Hendrickson 2002: 73). Deadlock was broken only in 1995, with the threat of a Republican takeover of Bosnian policy, and with the massacre at Srebrenica. Richard Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, began a diplomatic offensive which led within a few months to the Dayton Accords.

The situation in Somalia deteriorated rapidly following the acquisition of a UN 'nation-building' mandate in that country. Prodded by the US Congress, Clinton announced that all US forces would be withdrawn from Somalia by April 1994. The problems in Somalia, widely attributed to the phenomenon of 'mission creep', i.e. the expansion of the original humanitarian agenda, cast a long shadow. The Rwandan genocide of 1994 proceeded with a minimum of attention from either the UN or the USA. Clinton was later to describe relative non-involvement in Rwanda as the greatest shame of his administration. Military action did occur in Iraq, initially as part of the policy of 'keeping Saddam in his box' and of the commitment to 'dual containment' (of Iraq and Iran). Clinton emerged as an enthusiastic and frequent user of small-scale military force, including periodic air assaults on Iraq. In 1994, the USA launched what was to be a virtually bloodless invasion of Haiti. Designed to restore the rule of elected leader Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the invasion followed domestic pressure, associated particularly with the large refugee influx from Haiti.

KEY POINTS

- Until 1995, Clinton struggled to develop a credible and consistent policy towards the former Yugoslavia.
- Clinton's first term was dominated by free trade agendas and by efforts to operationalize the policy of 'selective engagement'.

President Clinton's second term, 1997–2001

As is the case with most presidencies, Clinton's second term witnessed a noticeable shifting of gear. The shift proceeded partly from the 1995 transformation in policy towards Bosnia. With declinism now a philosophy of the past, the post-1995 White House exuded greater confidence in America's ability to exercise global leadership. Above all, the Republican Congress began to make its presence felt. Congress pressed the executive towards unilateralist foreign policy options, and towards a new commitment to military spending. The second term also witnessed important international failures such as the failure to prevent India and Pakistan becoming viable nuclear powers.

The later security agenda extended also to Taiwan, where in 1996 Clinton moved to deter the threat of a Chinese invasion; to Iraq; to international terrorism; and to the Balkans. Regarding Iraq, the containment of the Baghdad regime gave way to willingness to countenance the possibility of 'regime change' (Ritter 2005). The international terrorist threat climbed swiftly up the bureaucratic tree. According to the second-term national security adviser, Sandy Berger, by 1995 Osama bin Laden 'was on the radar screen; in 1998 he was the radar screen' (Zegart 2007: 24; Branch 2009: 511). Attacks on US embassies in East Africa and the 2000 assault on the USS *Cole* kept these issues firmly on the agenda. The charge of insouciance towards terrorism has frequently, and unjustly, been levelled at the Clinton administration. The 9/11 Commission (2004: 340) offered a more balanced judgement. According to the Commission, the Clinton people 'took the threat seriously, but not in the sense of mustering anything like the kind of effort that would be gathered to confront an enemy of the first, second, or even third rank'. The missile attacks on putative terrorist targets in Sudan and Afghanistan were ineffectual and counterproductive.

In March 1999, NATO forces, led by the USA, instituted a seventy-eight-day bombing campaign against Serbia. The action, which Clinton dubbed 'the first ever humanitarian war', was taken following Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic's refusal to sign the Rambouillet Agreement, setting terms for a cessation of violence against the Albanian minority in the Serbian region of Kosovo (DiPrizio 2002: 130). The action led to Serb government capitulation and the entry of NATO forces into Kosovo. The bombing was hailed by sympathetic observers not just as the first humanitarian war, but also as the first war ever to be won by air power alone, albeit with a (more or less) credible threat of ground invasion. The war was waged outside any UN remit; Russia would almost certainly have vetoed the action in the Security Council. The willingness of the administration to follow unilateralist or quasi-unilateralist paths was evidenced further in its opposition to American involvement in the International Criminal Court, a position which Clinton reversed in his very final days in office. Republican pressure, along with the Clinton administration's re-evaluation of US military preparedness, led also to defence spending increases. Particularly conspicuous here was the revival of anti-missile defence, a cherished Republican cause harking back to President Reagan's Strategic Missile Defence programme.

Clinton's final year in office was dominated by the effort to achieve a Middle East peace settlement, building on the 1998 Wye River Accords between Israel and the Palestinians. Clinton's activism in Irish issues had been an important factor in achieving the Northern Ireland peace deal (the Good Friday, or Belfast, Agreement) in 1998. Clinton looked to replicate Irish peace promotion in the even more difficult conditions of the Middle East (Dumbrell 2009: 88–92, 146). Clinton's sponsorship of Israeli–Palestinian peace negotiations in 2000 achieved significant concessions on both sides of the conflict. Palestinian negotiators accepted that some Israeli settlements, with Israel providing security, could continue in the West Bank, and that Jewish areas of East Jerusalem could be part of Israel. Israelis accepted various loosely defined positions on the viability of a new Palestinian state. Major issues, however, notably the Palestinian refugee question, remained unresolved. The process failed, ultimately, to overcome decades of distrust and also the unwillingness or inability of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to move beyond long-held positions.

President Clinton continued, indeed confirmed, the willingness of the USA to use military force in ways that would have been familiar to many pre–Cold War presidents. In his last year in office, for example, the USA greatly extended its commitment to intervention against guerrilla movements in Colombia. Clinton's main concern was to find a foreign policy that reconciled expansive internationalism with the contractionist climate of the 1990s. As Stephen Walt put it, Clinton sought 'hegemony on the cheap' (Walt 2000: 78–9).

KEY POINTS

- Clinton's second term involved a noticeable turn towards unilateralism and remilitarization.
- The 1999 Kosovo campaign involved a denial of traditional notions of national sovereignty.

CONTROVERSIES 7.1: EVALUATING THE PRESIDENTS

Evaluating presidents and their foreign policy leadership

Evaluation of presidential performance is plagued by problems of subjectivism. Regarding presidential performance as a whole, Congressional success scores and the achievement of 'landmark' legislation are often regarded as key indicators of presidential success. In foreign policy, where legislation is less central than in the domestic arena, 'objective' Congressional voting success scores are much less helpful. Successful foreign policy leadership seems to reside in the following:

- Clarity of purpose and 'vision': this was especially important if policy was not merely to drift following the end of the Cold War.
- Effective procedures and skilled foreign policy management.
- Maintenance of a domestic foreign policy consensus.
- Protecting US security and international economic interests.
- Observing the requirements of domestic and international law.
- Avoiding manifest foreign policy disasters.

Evaluating G. H. W. Bush and Clinton

Both presidents struggled with the development and articulation of a post–Cold War foreign policy 'vision' for the United States. Bush's procedural management was generally sure and effective. Clinton's management was less sure-footed, but bears comparison with that of most presidents. Key Clinton team players—Secretary of State Warren Christopher and National Security Adviser Tony Lake in the first term; Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, National Security Adviser Sandy Berger, and (Republican) Secretary of Defense William Cohen in the second—worked reasonably effectively together. Despite setbacks, both Bush and Clinton managed to maintain a general domestic consensus behind at least a moderately expansive American internationalism. American global power—military, economic, and cultural—skyrocketed throughout the 1990s. Both presidents were committed to multilateralism in pursuit of American international interests, although Clinton's later foreign policy was marked by a move towards unilateralism. Clinton in particular weathered major assaults on his foreign and trade policies from Congress. However, both Bush and Clinton followed a 'presidentialist' foreign policy, with relatively little substantive concern for the rights and prerogatives of Congress. Foreign policy 'disasters' on the model of the Vietnam War did not occur in the 1990s, despite missed opportunities (for example, in the Balkans before 1995), outright failures (as in Somalia), and misjudgements (such as the assault on Sudan in 1998).

Conclusion: fire bells in the night

The two presidents of the 'long 1990s' differed considerably in temperament and in their understanding of the possibilities of American internationalism. President George H. W. Bush is conventionally regarded as a conservative realist. President Barack Obama praised the elder Bush's cautious realism during the 2008 presidential election campaign. Clinton is usually seen as developing aspects of Bush's New World Order, but as more inclined to 'assertive humanitarianism' and as more wedded to the agenda of economic globalization. Such generalizations are not especially insightful; they certainly tend to collapse when we consider Bush's far-from-cautious decision to send troops to Somalia in 1992. Whatever the differences between the two presidents, foreign policy leadership in the immediate post–Cold War period showed considerable unity of purpose (see Controversies 7.1). Bush's New World Order and Clinton's various formulations—'assertive humanitarianism', 'selective engagement', 'democratic enlargement', 'assertive multilateralism', 'engagement and enlargement'—were all attempts to keep expansive US internationalism alive in the post-Soviet environment. They were also efforts to articulate a foreign policy which looked beyond narrowly conceived national interest.

In retrospect, the immediate post–Cold War era of the 'long 1990s' appears a distinct phase in the history of US foreign policy. It had its own characteristic preoccupations, priorities, and processes. These years saw realist understandings of global politics take a back seat, at least until the shock of 9/11. The preoccupations of the 1990s included the concern of presidents to resist Congressional efforts to impinge upon executive control of foreign policy; a major debate over the possibility of effective humanitarian intervention in the new era; and (perhaps above all) efforts to come to terms with the complex dynamics of unipolarity and galloping globalization. The 1990s saw several pre-echoes of future dangers and convulsions. The later Clinton years witnessed a new awareness of the degree to which 'democratic peace' depended upon a successful containment of

international terrorism. Jitters in the world economy (such as the boom-and-bust cycle in internet stocks between 1995 and 2001) were already beginning to dent free-market optimism. Worries about US overstretch and the 'imperial temptation' emerged in the 1990s, only to be hugely expanded during the presidency of George W. Bush. Another 'fire bell in the night'—to use Thomas Jefferson's descriptive warning of upheavals to come—was the rise of anti-globalist 'new populism' (see Box 7.1), many of whose themes were to be revived in the 2016 presidential election campaign of Donald Trump.

BOX 7.1: THE NEW POPULISM: PROTESTING GLOBALIZATION

Opposition to galloping globalization emerged rather spectacularly in the context of the 1992 and 1996 presidential elections. On the Republican side, Patrick J. Buchanan (former communications director to President Ronald Reagan) battled George H. W. Bush for the nomination. Buchanan fought an 'America First', anti-immigration, and anti-globalization campaign. According to Buchanan, the US had temporarily ditched its nationalist heritage during the Cold War; now was the time to resume a foreign policy of economic nationalism and stout promotion of narrowly defined American interest. Buchanan, who won the New Hampshire Republican primary in 1996, frequently lapsed into racism, defending America's 'Judeo-Christian values' from being 'dumped in some landfill called multiculturalism' (Germond and Witcover 1993: 235). For the Democrats, Jerry Brown (former Governor of California), like Buchanan, opposed the North American Free Trade Agreement and argued that the US should not 'give a penny' to foreign aid 'until every small farmer, businessman and family' in America was relieved of debt (Schneider 1997: 29). Ross Perot's independent (1992) and Reform Party (1996) campaigns embodied similar protectionist and neo-isolationist themes. Perot (like the Republican victor in the 2016 presidential election) presented himself as the rich business wizard who understood the problems of the American in the street.

While Buchanan and Brown fell well short of gaining the presidential nomination, Perot's 19 per cent share of the popular vote in 1992 indicated the potency of anti-globalization populism. Many post-1994 Congressional Republicans had a 'new populist' tinge, with a strong tendency to favour unilateralism in foreign policy. After 1994, Republican Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina, an inveterate opponent of foreign aid and of American participation in the United Nations, headed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The effective denial of 'fast track' trade negotiation authority to President Clinton—putting severe obstacles in the way of future free trade agreements—amounted to a major victory for anti-globalization forces on Capitol Hill (Dumbrell 2009: 54–61). To many leftist opponents of the power of giant corporations, the World Trade Organization (WTO—the trade regulation body set up in 1995 to replace the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) came to symbolize the evils of US sponsorship of the globalizing capitalist order. The 1999 WTO summit meeting in Seattle was the occasion of major street protests.

US public opinion in the 1990s certainly can be reasonably portrayed as exhibiting 'new populist' features. Foreign aid and 'global altruism' slipped down most polled lists of public priorities (Rielly 1995; Rosner 1995–6; Bacevich 1996). Yet post–Cold War public introversion had its limits. There was, for example, little public enthusiasm for quitting international bodies such as the UN and NATO (Kull 1995–6).

QUESTIONS

1. To what extent was the 'long 1990s' (1989–2001) a distinct phase in the history of US foreign policy?
2. Why was realism seen to be in retreat during the 1990s?
3. What foreign policy options were available to foreign policy leaders in the immediate post–Cold war period?
4. How coherent was President George H. W. Bush's vision for post–Cold War US foreign policy?
5. How coherent was President Bill Clinton's vision for post–Cold War US foreign policy?
6. How influential was the 'new populism' in the making of 1990s US foreign policy?

7. What were America's objectives in the 1991 Gulf War and how comprehensively were they achieved?
8. Compare and contrast the records of presidents George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton as foreign policy managers.
9. To what extent did American leaders in the 'long 1990s' bequeath an unsustainable commitment to US global hegemony to their successors?

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8

The twenty-first century and smart power

Joseph S. Nye, Jr.

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Introduction

Foreign policy requires hard and soft power—attracting and persuading as well as pushing and paying.[1] Soft power alone rarely solves hard problems; nor sometimes does hard power. Smart strategies combine hard and soft power so that they reinforce rather than contradict each other. As the twenty-first century began, the George W. Bush administration had little interest in soft power and placed a strong emphasis on hard power, as exemplified by the invasion and occupation of Iraq. This was particularly true after 9/11. The al-Qaeda attack on the US on 11 September 2001 did not have a great economic or military impact, but it had a profound psychological effect on American foreign policy. The Bush administration tried to squeeze the new non-state attack into the traditional interstate framework, but that turned out to be a poor fit.

The four-week war in Iraq was a dazzling display of America's hard military power that removed a tyrant, but it did not resolve America's vulnerability to terrorism and may have increased it. It was also costly in terms of the soft power to attract others. In the aftermath of the war, polling by the Pew Research Center showed a dramatic decline in the popularity of the United States even in countries such as Spain and Italy, whose governments had provided support. America's standing also plummeted in the eyes of Islamic countries from Morocco through Turkey to Southeast Asia. For example, in Indonesia, the world's largest Islamic country, three-quarters of the public said they had a favourable opinion of the United States in 2000, but within three

years that had shrunk to 15 percent. Yet the US would need the help of such countries in the long term to track the flow of terrorists, tainted money, and dangerous weapons. Despite its impressive resources, the attractiveness of the United States declined quite sharply. Indeed, after the war, unfavourable images of the US were held by the majority of people in nearly two-thirds of nineteen countries surveyed. The second term of the Bush administration included more nuance and appeals to soft power than his first term, notably his efforts to combat AIDS in Africa and to increase economic aid. His military surge prevented a full defeat by the insurgency in Iraq in 2007, but public opinion in the US and elsewhere had come to view the Iraq War as a serious foreign policy blunder. That opinion contributed to the election of Barack Obama in 2008.

Obama's 'smart power'

The Obama administration referred to its foreign policy as 'smart power', which combined hard and soft power resources in different contexts. In sending additional troops to Afghanistan, using air power to create a no-fly zone in Libya, using special forces and drones against the Islamic State, and killing Osama bin Laden in Pakistan, Obama showed that he was willing to use the hard components of smart power. Nonetheless, he was more prudent in the use of force and placed more emphasis on soft power than Bush had done. Obama began his foreign policy with a series of overseas speeches designed to enhance American soft power.

Critics portrayed Obama as a rock star who won a Nobel peace prize prematurely on the basis of rhetoric rather than performance. But in addition to words there were some important deeds, particularly in the production of global public goods. First and foremost was the handling of the global economic crisis known as 'the Great Recession'. When Obama came into office, he was told by his economic advisors that there was one chance in three of a 1930s-style Depression. If he had not avoided that disaster, all else would have paled. This required not only an economic stimulus package at home, but international coordination, in which the US provided the crucial public good of being a lender of last resort as a means to restore confidence. However, Obama's efforts to negotiate and ratify trade agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership failed to receive Congressional approval in the face of rising populist pressures at home. Obama's efforts to negotiate an agreement on global climate change led to a degree of success with the Paris agreement of December 2015, and his 2015 summit agreement with China on restricting commercial cyber espionage was subsequently approved by the G-20.

Closely related to these global issues was Obama's handling of relations with China, whose rise is one of the most important foreign policy challenges of the twenty-first century. Obama tried to rebalance foreign policy attention from the Middle East to Asia in a policy that became known as the 'pivot to Asia.' He had twenty-four face-to-face meetings with Chinese presidents Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping. At the same time Obama maintained close alliances with Japan, Korea, and Australia, and built on Bush's improvement of relations with India to maintain the hard power capabilities that helped shape the environment for a rising China (particularly in relation to its goals in the East and South China Seas).

Globally, Obama sought to reframe the issue of nuclear weapons by embracing the long-term goal of a non-nuclear world (although stating that it was unlikely to occur in his lifetime), negotiating a replacement of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty that further cut the American and Russian strategic arsenals, and convening summits on nuclear security. He also raised the non-proliferation issue on the agenda of both the UN and the G20, and developed multilateral support for sanctions on Iran for failing to meet its international obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty. In 2016, after prolonged negotiations, he led a six-power coalition to an agreement that limited Iran's nuclear programme. On the other hand, efforts to denuclearize North Korea proved unsuccessful.

In December 2009, Obama decided to increase American troops in Afghanistan; he later achieved a NATO consensus that the alliance would train Afghan forces with the intent of handing over primary responsibility for security to them by 2014, but he had failed to meet that objective by the time he handed over the presidency to Donald Trump in January 2017. In March 2011, Obama worked with the Arab League, the UN, and NATO to develop support for the use of air power to protect civilians in Libya (see Controversies 8.1), but later reluctance to intervene on the ground with peacekeeping forces left Libya in disarray. During the 'Arab Spring' rebellions of 2011, the Obama administration struggled to combine the hard power of military assistance to governments like Egypt with a soft power narrative of democracy and reform that would appeal to the younger generation of protesters, but they were outmanoeuvred by stronger forces on the

ground. In Syria, Obama sided with moderate opponents to the Assad regime, but resisted pressures to set up safety or no-fly zones when it was unclear whether the beneficiary might be the Islamic State. Some critics applauded his prudence; others proclaimed the Syrian civil war to be his greatest failure.

CONTROVERSIES 8.1: OBAMA AND LIBYA

Obama's decision to support a no-fly zone in Libya is a useful case study of the controversies surrounding smart power policies. When President Obama delayed intervening in Libya for weeks, he was criticized for failing to lead. Unlike George W. Bush in Iraq, Obama did not plunge ahead decisively with the use of force, but although Bush was more decisive in Iraq, he also turned out to be decisively wrong about the presence of weapons of mass destruction and the ease of creating a democratic polity in Iraq. The result was a sharp drop in America's international standing.

In designing his strategy for Libya, Obama showed awareness of both hard and soft dimensions of power. First he was careful to limit both American objectives and commitments. Humanitarian interests are important but not vital in the sense of national survival. Moreover, there is always a danger of good intentions leading to unintended bad consequences, as happened after George H. W. Bush intervened in Somalia in 1992. Thus, while Obama said that the United States wanted to see Qaddafi overthrown, he made it clear that would have to be done by means other than American military action. Second, Obama was careful not to create a global narrative of a third American military attack on a Muslim country, which would have reverberated from Morocco to Indonesia. Instead, he waited until the Arab League and UN Security Council resolutions provided a narrative of a legitimate enforcement of a humanitarian responsibility to protect civilians. Third, he encouraged France, Britain, and other allies to share in the lead, and also encouraged the devolution of the operation of the no-fly zone to NATO, a multilateral institution. Obama avoided sliding down a slippery slope of intervention.

The outcome in Libya, however, was not an unqualified success. As the mission changed from the responsibility to protect citizens to the removal of Qaddafi, Russia ceased its support and later used its veto to prevent UN Security Council action in Syria. The fighting among factions in Libya, and the absence of an effective outside peacekeeping force, provided opportunities for the terrorist so-called Islamic State to intervene. Some realists questioned Obama's initial decision to be involved in a humanitarian action at all, even though he had tried to balance interests and values while limiting risks. At the same time that some faulted him for intervening in Libya, other critics faulted him for not intervening more in Syria.

Trump's 'America First'

Obama's successor, Donald J. Trump, was critical both of Bush's intervention in Iraq and of the multilateral agreements negotiated by the Obama administration. Trump regarded Obama as weak, and emphasized hard power. He announced his aims as 'America First', 'peace through strength', and 'to make America great again.' As the *Washington Post* commented at the time of the transition, 'if Trump follows through with this confrontational approach, it will represent a sharp break with the multifaceted foreign policy strategy that both Democratic and Republican presidents have practiced for decades, including reliance on what diplomats call "soft power" to achieve objectives and avoid conflict. Instead Trump views foreign policy as largely transactional, aides say, and his goal is to win—by speaking loudly and carrying a big stick.' But Vali Nasr, a Middle East expert, warned that 'The America First rhetoric, combined with the anti-Muslim rhetoric, will constrain America's ability to persuade world powers to work with us' (Nakamura and Eilperin, 2016).

During the 2016 campaign, Trump stunned allies by questioning America's alliances and dismissed NATO as 'obsolete.' Yet three months into his presidency he changed his mind about NATO and the American alliance with Japan. Observers were uncertain about whether or not Trump's role in history would be to preside over the end of the American liberal world order. In the nineteenth century, the US was a minor player in world politics, but in 1917, Woodrow Wilson sent two million soldiers to Europe and tipped the balance in the First World War. However, the Senate rejected Wilson's League of Nations; the troops came home and the United States became virulently isolationist in the 1930s. America was the largest power, but it did not take the lead in producing order. Arguably the result was a disastrous decade marked by economic depression, genocide, and world war.

The Second World War was the wake-up call. Harry Truman's post-war decisions created permanent alliances and American troops remain in Europe, Japan, and Korea to this day. While Americans have had

bitter debates over intervention in developing countries such as Vietnam and Iraq, the bedrock consensus in American foreign policy for seven decades was the alliance system.

Trump described the US as a country in decline and promised to make it great again. Among the range of possible futures for American power are ones in which a new challenger such as Europe, Russia, India, Brazil, or China surpasses the United States and precipitates the end of American centrality to the global balance of power. However, the rise of populism and unilateralsim at home may turn out to be a greater problem for the US than the rise of a peer competitor abroad.

A major problem for the United States is less that it will be overtaken by China or another contender, but that it will be faced with a rise in the power resources of many others—both states and non-state actors. The problem will be entropy—the inability to get work done. An increasing number of new transnational issues will require power *with* others as much as power *over* others. This is a world that requires networks, institutions, and the soft power of attraction. In a world of growing complexity, the most connected states are the most powerful. Networks are important assets for generating the soft power of attraction that is necessary to organize states to deal with the new transnational threats ranging from terrorism to financial instability to climate change. Yet the Trump administration downgraded the role of soft power. Trump's budget director proudly pronounced a 'hard power budget' and sought major cuts in funds for the State Department and the United Nations, and Trump withdrew from the Paris accords on climate change. On the other hand, his secretary of defense, James Mattis, told Congress on 22 March 2017 that 'America has two fundamental powers, the power of intimidation and the power of inspiration. Soft power is largely found in the power of inspiration' (US Global Leadership Coalition, 2017).

American leaders after the Second World War created international institutions as well as alliances. They understood that smart power requires the combination of hard and soft power resources. The United Nations outlined a framework regarding the use of force; the Bretton Woods economic institutions created monetary and trade relations that led to unprecedented prosperity. The system the United States created has been called a 'liberal international order' because openness produced public goods available to all. But the label is confusing because it covers political-military affairs; economic relations; ecological relations; and even promotion of liberal values. It remains to be seen to what degree these different aspects depend on each other and what the result will be if the post-1945 package is unpacked. Some aspects may persist while others vanish. Early in the Trump administration, the military alliances looked more robust than Trump's campaign rhetoric had suggested. But the same cannot be said about the international economic system or the governance of global commons.

Smart foreign policy in an information age confronts an increasingly complex framework of power in world politics. Traditionally, the mark of a great power was its ability to prevail in war. But in an information age, success depends not just on whose army wins, but also on whose story wins, both at home and abroad. The first three presidencies of the twenty-first century present interesting tests and different responses to this complexity and the narratives they generated (see Key quotes 8.1). While it is too early to assess the full effects of the Trump presidency, the coming years can provide what economists call a 'natural experiment'.

KEY QUOTES 8.1: COMPETING APPROACHES TO FOREIGN POLICY

The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom.

(President George W. Bush, Address to the Republican Convention, 2 September 2004)

Our power grows through its prudent use; our security emanates from the justness of our cause, the force of our example, the tempering qualities of humility and restraint.

(President Barack Obama, Inaugural Address, 20 January 2009)

We must use what has been called 'smart power', the full range of tools at our disposal.

(Hillary Clinton, confirmation hearing for Secretary of State, 13 January 2009)

Secretaries Clinton and Gates have called for more funding and more emphasis on our soft power, and I could not agree with them more. Should we choose to exert American influence solely through our troops, we should expect to see that influence diminish in time.

(Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Landon lecture, 3 March 2010)

From this day forward, it's going to be only America first—America first.

(President Donald Trump, Inaugural Address, 20 January 2017)

Twenty-first century presidents were faced with the two important types of historical power shifts: a 'horizontal' power transition among states and a 'vertical' power diffusion from states to non-state actors. Power transition from one dominant state to another is a familiar historical event, and in adjusting American policy Bush and Obama both resisted the misleading metaphor of American decline but accepted the rise of emerging powers such as China, India, Brazil, and others. Whether their successor, Donald Trump, will continue this policy remains to be seen. Bush and Obama also tried to maintain working relations with a declining Russia, but with only mixed results. Again, Trump entered office with a proclaimed intent of improving relations, but political reaction against Russian cyber meddling in the 2016 election constrained Trump's options.

The other important power transition at the beginning of the new century is power diffusion, a more novel process and more difficult to manage. The problem for all states in today's global information age is that more things are happening outside the control of even the most powerful states. These were the major changes in the context of global politics that Obama was trying to cope with in developing his policy of smart power, and which Trump also faces as he tries to put foreign policy content into his slogan of 'make America great again'.

Power in a global information age

Power is the ability to obtain the outcomes one wants, and in behavioural terms that can be done in three ways: through threat of coercion (sticks), through payments (carrots), and through attraction and persuasion. That third way is soft power, and a state that is able to use soft power can save on carrots and sticks.

In foreign policy, some goals are impossible to achieve with soft power, but others are more susceptible to soft than hard power. Arnold Wolfers once distinguished between what he called possession goals—specific and often tangible objectives—and milieu goals, which are often structural and intangible. For example, access to resources or basing rights or a trade agreement are possession goals, while promoting an open trade system, free markets, democracy, and human rights are milieu goals. Focusing solely on hard power may mislead us about how best to promote such goals.

American foreign policy debate tends to focus on hard power because of political culture and institutions. No politician wants to appear 'soft', and Congress finds it easier to boost the budget of the Pentagon than the State Department. A pragmatic or common sense realist takes into account the full spectrum of power resources, including ideas, persuasion, and attraction.

Networks

A state can wield global power by engaging and acting together with other states, not merely acting against them. John Ikenberry has argued that American power after the Second World War rested on a network of institutions that constrained the US but were open to others and thus increased American power to act with others (Ikenberry 2006). This is an important point in assessing American foreign policy in the current international system. For example, if the US is involved in more communication networks, it has a greater opportunity to shape preferences in terms of soft power. In 2016, the US had some 60 treaty allies, far more than any other state.

Communication strategies

It is not solely in relations among states, however, that soft power plays an important role. In an information age, communications strategies become more important, and outcomes are shaped not merely by whose army wins, but also by whose story wins. In combating terrorism, for example, it is essential to have a narrative that appeals to the mainstream and prevents recruitment by radicals. In battling insurgencies, kinetic military force must be accompanied by soft power instruments that help to win over the hearts and minds (and shape the preferences) of the majority of the population. Social media like Facebook and YouTube play important roles.

Smart strategies must have an information and communication component. States struggle over the power to define norms, and framing of issues grows in importance. For instance, while CNN and the BBC framed the issues of the first Gulf War in 1991, by 2003, Al Jazeera played a large role in shaping the narrative in the Iraq War. Such framing is more than mere propaganda. In describing events in March 2003, one could say that American troops 'entered Iraq', or that American troops 'invaded Iraq'. Both statements are true, but they have very different effects in terms of their power to shape preferences. Later, with the 'Arab Spring' revolutions in 2011, and the rise of the terrorist group so-called Islamic State, social media became more important in a soft power strategy. Similarly,

Figure 8.1 The spectrum of power behaviours.

Hard ——— Soft

Command> Coerce Threat Pay Sanction Frame Persuade Attract <Co-opt

if one thinks of international institutions, it makes a difference if agendas are set in a group of seven developed states with a few invited guests or a group of twenty equal invitees. The spectrum of power behaviours is represented in Figure 8.1.

Tangibles and intangibles

In general, the types of resources that are associated with hard power include tangibles such as force and money, while the resources that are associated with soft power often include intangible factors such as institutions, ideas, values, culture, and the perceived legitimacy of policies. But the relationship is not perfect. Intangible resources such as patriotism, morale, and legitimacy strongly affect the capacity to fight and win. And threats to use force are intangible, but are a dimension of hard power. If one distinguishes between power resources and power behaviour, one realizes that resources often associated with hard power behaviour can also produce soft power behaviour depending on the context and how they are used. Since attraction depends upon the mind of the perceiver, the subject's perceptions play a significant role in whether given resources produce hard or soft power behaviour.

For example, naval forces can be used to win battles (hard power) or win hearts and minds (soft power), depending on who the target is and what the issue is. President George W. Bush sent the US Navy to help in providing relief to Indonesia after the 2004 East Asian tsunami, and that had a strong effect on increasing Indonesians' attraction toward the United States. The Navy's 2007 Maritime Strategy refers not only to war fighting but additionally to maritime forces that will be employed to build confidence and trust among nations. Cyber actors play an increased role, both as instruments of governments and as independent actors empowered in a new domain.

Many types of *resources* can contribute to soft power, but that does not mean that soft power is any type of *behaviour*. The use of force and payment (and some agenda setting based on them) is hard power. Agenda setting that is regarded as legitimate by the target, positive attraction, and persuasion are the parts of the spectrum of behaviours included in soft power. Hard power is push; soft power is pull. Fully defined, soft power is the ability to affect others to obtain preferred outcomes by the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuasion, and positive attraction. Smart power is the combination of hard and soft power resources into successful strategies in various contexts. In 2016 a London consultancy, Portland, produced a 'Soft Power 30' index (McClory 2016) that ranked the US first (China was twenty-eighth). Whether the US retains that ranking in the next years will be an interesting test of Trump's treatment of soft power.

KEY POINTS

- The resources that produce power are changing in a global information age. While hard military and economic power remains important, the soft power of attraction and persuasion is becoming increasingly important, particularly in dealing with global issues.
- Realists are correct in arguing that global politics is power politics, but they sometimes mistakenly restrict their definitions of power to hard power alone.
- Smart power is the ability to combine hard and soft power resources into successful strategies in different contexts.

Soft power in American foreign policy

Sometimes attraction and the resulting soft power it engenders require little effort. The effects of values can be like the light from 'a city on a hill', the phrase originally coined by the seventeenth-century Puritan John Winthrop and adapted for twentieth-century American foreign policy by President Ronald Reagan. At other times, efforts to create attraction and soft power are more complicated, and soft power can work directly

and indirectly. In the direct form, leaders may be attracted and persuaded by the benignity, competence, or charisma of other leaders. More common, however, is an indirect model in which publics and third parties are influenced, and they in turn affect the leaders of other countries. In this case, soft power has an important indirect effect by creating an enabling environment for decisions. Alternatively, if an actor or action is perceived as repulsive, it creates a disabling environment.

Judging direct causation requires careful process tracing of the sort that good historians or journalists do, with all the difficulties of sorting out multiple causes when trying to trace whether a given influence effort was an important part of achieving a preferred outcome. With indirect effects, public opinion polls and careful content analysis can help provide a first estimate of the existence of an enabling or disabling environment. Even though polls can measure the existence of and trends in potential soft power resources, they are only a first approximation for behavioural change in terms of outcomes, since it is elites that make decisions.

Student and leadership exchanges are a good example of direct effects that do not go through public opinion. Forty-six current and 165 former heads of government are products of US higher education. Not all of the nearly one million foreign students who come to the US annually are attracted by the country, but the large majority are. 'Research has consistently shown that exchange students return home with a more positive view of the country in which they studied and the people with whom they interacted', and foreign-educated students are more likely to promote democracy in their home country if they are educated in democratic countries (Atkinson 2009; see also Spilimbergo 2009). The results can be dramatic. For example, Mikhail Gorbachev's embrace of *perestroika* and *glasnost* was influenced by ideas learned at Columbia University, New York, by exchange student Alexander Yakovlev, even though they took two decades to come to full fruition. And while the end of the Cold War involved multiple causes, there is ample testimony by former Soviet elites about how Western ideas interacted with Soviet economic decline.

With the indirect model, public opinion affects elites by creating an enabling or disabling environment for specific policy initiatives. For example, in regard to Iraq in 2003, Turkish officials were constrained by public and parliamentary opinion and unable to allow the American 4th Infantry Division to cross their country. The Bush administration's lack of soft power in Turkey hurt its hard power. Similarly, Mexican President Vicente Fox wished to accommodate George W. Bush by supporting a second UN resolution authorizing invasion, but was constrained by Mexican public opinion. When being pro-American is a political kiss of death, public opinion has an effect on policy that the sceptics do not capture.

As noted above, in addition to specific goals, countries often have general 'milieu goals' such as democracy, human rights, and open economic systems. Here the target of soft power *is* broad public opinion and cultural attitudes. After the Second World War, American power to promote such goals in post-war Europe was strongly affected by the attraction to its culture and ideas. While governmental programmes such as the Marshall Plan were important, historians of the period stress the impact of non-state actors as well. 'American corporate and advertising executives, as well as the heads of Hollywood studios, were selling not only their products but also America's culture and values, the secrets of its success, to the rest of the world' (Pells 1997: xxii). As one Norwegian scholar argued, 'federalism, democracy, and open markets represented core American values. This is what America exported.' That made it much easier to maintain what he called an 'empire by invitation' (Lundestad 1998: 155).

Today, the challenges to American foreign policy are different. Non-state actors use terrorism to create a climate of polarization in which an extremist narrative can spread to wider parts of the Muslim world. Misuse of hard power may play into the hands of the terrorists. It is estimated that the American invasion of Iraq, for example, helped al-Qaeda to recruit new members. Soft power becomes essential in helping to win the hearts and minds of the mainstream, who can provide the information and cooperation that enhances hard power.

The 'city on a hill' or values effect of soft power should not be exaggerated, particularly in its impact on specific rather than milieu goals. An interesting 'natural experiment' was the 2008 election of Barack Obama, the first African-American president, which helped to dispel negative stereotypes of a closed American political system. In 2009, polls showed an impressive revival of America's global image in many parts of the world, reflecting confidence in the new president. One poll-based assessment of brand values even suggested the Obama effect was worth two trillion dollars in brand equity (Anholt 2009; see also *The Economist* 2010). But in areas like Pakistan and

the Palestinian territories where American policies were unpopular, ratings of Obama were only marginally better than the abysmal ratings accorded to Bush. In constructing narratives, deeds matter as well as words.

Interestingly, American military analysts trying to understand the problems they faced when dealing with the counter-insurgency in Iraq developed doctrines that recognized the importance of soft power. In the words of General David Petraeus, 'we did reaffirm in Iraq the recognition that you don't kill or capture your way out of an industrial-strength insurgency' (Gamel 2008). Or as the American commander in Afghanistan noted, when we resort to expedient measures, 'we end up paying a price for it ultimately. Abu Ghraib and other situations like that are non-biodegradable. They don't go away. The enemy continues to beat you with them like a stick' (Berger 2010).

Except at the tactical level, the military options for the use of soft power have to been seen in a larger policy context. As the Australian expert David Kilcullen noted:

> "This implies that America's international reputation, moral authority, diplomatic weight, persuasive ability, cultural attractiveness and strategic credibility—its 'soft power'—is not some optional adjunct to military strength. Rather, it is a critical enabler for a permissive operating environment … and it is also the prime political competence in countering a globalized insurgency."

(Kilcullen 2011: 14)

Narratives and public diplomacy

Soft power is difficult for governments to wield. Sustained attraction—being a 'city on a hill'—requires consistency of practice with values. Going further to project attraction, frame agendas, and persuade others is even more difficult. The causal paths are often indirect, the effects often take time to ripen, some of the general goals to which soft power may be directed are diffuse, and the government is rarely in full control of all the instruments. That is true of efforts to create soft power through the practice of public diplomacy—or actions designed to affect public opinion in other states. Classical diplomacy, sometimes called cabinet diplomacy, involved messages sent from one ruler to another, often in confidential communications. But governments also find it useful to communicate with the publics of other countries in an effort to influence other governments through the indirect model.

The United States began to incorporate public diplomacy into its foreign policy during the First World War. In 1917, President Woodrow Wilson established a Committee on Public Information directed by his friend, the newspaperman George Creel, who described his task as a vast enterprise in salesmanship. Creel insisted that his office's activities did not constitute propaganda and were merely educational and informative. But the facts belied his denials. Among other things, Creel organized tours, churned out pamphlets on 'the Gospel of Americanism', established a government-run news service, made sure that motion picture producers received wartime allotments of scarce materials, and saw to it that the films portrayed America in a positive light. The office aroused sufficient suspicions that it was abolished shortly after the return of peace.

The advent of radio in the 1920s led many governments into the arena of foreign-language broadcasting, and in the 1930s communists and fascists competed to promote favourable images to foreign publics. In addition to its foreign-language radio broadcasts, Nazi Germany perfected the propaganda film. By the late 1930s, the Roosevelt administration became convinced that America's security depended on its ability to speak to and win the support of people in other countries, particularly in Latin America. By 1941, the United States was broadcasting around the clock. What became known as the Voice of America (VOA) grew rapidly during the Second World War. Modelled after the BBC in approach, by 1943 it had 23 transmitters delivering news in 27 languages. With the growth of the Soviet threat in the Cold War, the VOA continued to expand, but so did a debate about how much it should be a captive purveyor of government information or an independent representative of American culture. Special radio stations were added, such as Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, which used exiles to broadcast to the Eastern bloc. More generally, as the Cold War developed, there was a division between those who favoured the slow media of cultural diplomacy—art, books, exchanges—that had a 'trickle-down effect', and those who favoured the fast information media of radio, movies, and newsreels, which promised more immediate and visible bang for the buck.

Throughout the Cold War, these two approaches struggled over how the government should invest in soft power. The tough-minded did not shy away from direct

propaganda, while the tender-minded argued that changing foreign attitudes is a gradual process that should be measured in years. There were also struggles over how directed and how free government-supported programmes should be. There was a thin line between information and propaganda. During the Cold War, some cultural and information activities were financed by the Central Intelligence Agency, but when these activities were disclosed in the early 1970s, they lost their credibility. Propaganda lacks credibility and thus rarely creates soft power.

These struggles persisted despite various reorganizations of American institutions for public diplomacy over the years. The tension between how directly or indirectly the government should try to control its instruments of soft power can never be fully resolved because both sides make valid points. In 1999, the United States Information Agency (USIA) was abolished and its functions absorbed into the State Department, where it would be closer to policy. Some regard this as a mistake, since soft power depends on credibility and that comes more from a diverse civil society than from government policy.

With the end of the Cold War, Americans were more interested in budget savings than in investments in soft power. From 1963 to 1993, the US federal budget grew fifteen-fold, but the USIA budget grew only six-and-a-half times. Soft power seemed expendable. Between 1989 and 1999, the budget of USIA, adjusted for inflation, decreased 10 per cent. While government-funded radio broadcasts reached half the Soviet population every week and between 70 and 80 per cent of the populace of Eastern Europe during the Cold War, at the beginning of the new century, a mere 2 per cent of Arabs heard the VOA. Soft power had become so identified with fighting the Cold War that few Americans noticed that with an information revolution occurring, soft power was becoming more rather than less important. Only after September 2001 did Americans rediscover the importance of investing in the instruments of soft power.

The George W. Bush administration's initial emphasis on unilateralism, hard power, and the invasion of Iraq undercut American soft power. Polls showed a precipitous drop in the attractiveness of the United States in Europe, Latin America, and particularly the Muslim world. The president's stirring rhetoric about a freedom agenda in his second inaugural address was better designed for domestic than for foreign audiences, which heard it as hypocritical. Moreover, the administration's approach tended towards a centralized 'selling' of the American message that was often discounted as propaganda and thus not credible to foreign audiences.

KEY POINTS

- In an information age, narratives and stories that attract and persuade become an important aspect of power.
- As information technologies have evolved from radio to television to the internet, the American government has sought to take advantage of them to convey soft power.
- To be credible, narratives must be consistent with actions. Propaganda is rarely credible, and thus cannot create the attraction of soft power.
- Traditional diplomacy is directed by governments to other governments. In public diplomacy, governments address public opinion in other countries and try to influence other governments indirectly.

Problems in wielding soft power

Governments trying to utilize public diplomacy in the twenty-first century face new problems. Promoting attractive images of one's country is not new, but the conditions for trying to create soft power have changed. For one thing, nearly half the countries in the world are now democracies. In such circumstances, diplomacy aimed at public opinion can become as important to outcomes as the traditional classified diplomatic communications among leaders. Information creates power, and today a much larger part of the world's population has access to that power. Technological advances have led to a dramatic reduction in the cost of processing and transmitting information. The result is an explosion of information, and that has produced a paradox of plenty. Plentiful information leads to scarcity of attention. When people are overwhelmed with the volume of information confronting them, it is hard to know what to focus on. Attention rather than information becomes the scarce resource, and those who can distinguish valuable information from background clutter gain power.

Credibility

Politics has become a contest of competitive credibility. The world of traditional power politics is typically about whose military or economy wins. As noted earlier, politics in an information age 'may ultimately be about whose story wins' (Arquila and Ronfeldt 1999). Narratives become the currency of soft power. Governments compete with each other and with

other organizations to enhance their own credibility and weaken that of their opponents. Information that appears to be propaganda may not only be scorned, but it may also turn out to be counterproductive if it undermines a country's reputation for credibility.

Mass media

The centralized mass media approach to public diplomacy still plays an important role. Governments need to correct daily misrepresentations of their policies as well as to try to convey a longer-term strategic message. The main strength of the mass media approach is its audience reach and its ability to generate public awareness and set the agenda. But the inability to influence how the message is perceived in different cultural settings is its weak point. The sender knows what she says, but not always what the target(s) hear. Cultural barriers are apt to distort what is heard. This is particularly true in the fragmented audiences of social media, where 'fake news' is easy to propagate and can be manipulated by governments and non-governmental actors. Propaganda and information operations were common in the Cold War, but Russia has been particularly effective in reviving them in the cyber era. It is ironic that one of the Obama's first efforts in 2009 was to improve relations with Russia and one of its last actions in 2016 was to impose sanctions in response to Russian hacking of emails in the American presidential election.

New public diplomacy

The greater flexibility of non-governmental organizations in using networks has given rise to what some call the 'new public diplomacy', which is no longer confined to messaging, promotion campaigns, or even direct governmental contacts with foreign publics serving foreign policy purposes. It is also about building relationships with civil society actors in other countries and about facilitating networks between non-governmental parties at home and abroad. In this approach to public diplomacy, government policy is aimed at promoting and participating in, rather than controlling, such networks across borders. Indeed, too much government control, or even the appearance thereof, can undercut the credibility that such networks are designed to engender. The evolution of public diplomacy from one-way communications to a two-way dialogue model treats publics as peer-to-peer co-creators of meaning and communication. This approach was important in the Bush and Obama administrations but has been cut back in Trump's foreign policy budget.

Much of a country's soft power or attraction is produced by its civil society rather than the government. For the United States to succeed in the networked world of the new public diplomacy, it is going to have to learn to relinquish a good deal of its control, and this runs the risk that non-governmental civil society actors are often not aligned in their goals with government policies or even objectives. For example, in 2011, after the pastor of a tiny church in Florida burned a Quran, riots in Afghanistan led to the deaths of UN workers.

The domestic political problems of the new public diplomacy are real, but the international effects can be beneficial. The presence of dissent and self-criticism is likely to enhance the credibility of messages, as well as to create a degree of attraction to the society that is willing to tolerate it. When Wikileaks released secret cables from American diplomats in 2010, one international reaction was embarrassment, but another was praise for the fact that even in secret cables the United States seemed to evidence genuine concern for human rights. Criticism of government policies can be awkward for a government, but it can also cast a society in a more attractive light and thus help to create soft power. The paradox of using public diplomacy to generate soft power in a global information age is that decentralization and diminished control may be central to the creation of soft power. As public diplomacy is done more *by* publics, governments find themselves facing a dilemma, but here the open nature of American society may prove more helpful to its soft power than the orchestrated campaigns by governments. Even if the Trump administration cuts back on its financing of public diplomacy, American civil society ranging from Hollywood to universities to foundations may continue to create attraction.

Power becomes less hierarchical in an information age, and social networks become more important. That means that two-way communications are more effective than commands. As a young Czech participant in an exchange programme during the Cold War observed, 'this is the best propaganda because it's not propaganda'. Interactive discourse fits with empowering choices. It involves recognition that the sharing of values can be interactive and binding on the US as well as others. To a large extent, the future of American soft power in the twenty-first century will depend upon accepting rather than rejecting such multilateral and civil society approaches.

Conclusion

Under the influence of the information revolution and globalization, world politics is changing in a way that means the US cannot achieve many of its international goals acting alone. For example, international financial stability is vital to the prosperity of Americans, but the United States needs the cooperation of others to ensure it. Global climate change will affect the quality of life, but Americans cannot manage the problem alone. And in a world where borders are becoming more porous to everything from drugs to infectious diseases to terrorism, nations must use soft power to develop networks and build institutions to address shared threats and challenges.

The US will remain the largest country in the international system, and the case for the largest country providing leadership in organizing the production of global collective goods remains strong. In some areas of military and economic goods, American leadership can provide a large part of the answer. But on the new transnational issues, while American leadership will be important, success will require the cooperation of others. In this sense, power becomes a positive-sum game. If the American century is to continue, it will not be enough to think in terms of American power *over* others. One must also think in terms of power *to* accomplish joint goals which involves power *with* others. On many transnational issues, empowering others can help the US to accomplish its own goals. In this world, networks and connectedness become an important source of relevant power (Nye 2015). Yet the Trump administration has rejected the image of an international community and portrayed global politics simply as an arena for struggles for competitive advantage (McMaster and Cohn 2017).

Military force will remain an important component of American power, but it is a blunt instrument. An American strategy that holds the military balance in Europe or East Asia while maintaining alliances will be an important source of influence, but trying to occupy and control the internal politics of nationalistic populations in the Middle East revolutions is a recipe for failure. Furthermore, military force is not much help on transnational issues like the internet, climate change, or financial stability.

Smart leadership in a global information age is less about being the king of the mountain issuing commands that cascade down a hierarchy than being the person in the centre of a circle or network who attracts and persuades others to come and help. Both the hard power of coercion and the soft power of attraction and persuasion are crucial to success in such situations. These are the twenty-first century foreign policy dilemmas with which Bush, Obama, and now Trump have tried to cope.

QUESTIONS

1. What were the major foreign policy problems that Bush, Obama, and Trump faced when they came into office in 2001, 2009, and 2017 respectively?
2. What did the Obama administration mean by its reference to smart power?
3. What is power? What is the difference between hard and soft power? How can they be combined?
4. How is power changing in a global information age?
5. Were Bush's and Obama's and Trump's responses to these changes appropriate?
6. What is public diplomacy? How does it differ from traditional diplomacy? How has it changed over time?
7. What are the difficulties involved in deploying soft power?

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ENDNOTE

1. Parts of this essay draw upon my book, *The Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs Press, 2011).

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SECTION 3

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Domestic influences on foreign policy making

Valentina Aronica and Inderjeet Parmar

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Introduction

The election of Donald Trump as president of the United States threatens to alter the nation's foreign policy and national security strategies, as well as challenging ideas and principles that have been regarded as the bedrock of American power in the world since 1945, regardless of the political cast of successive presidential administrations. This chapter aims at providing a broad analysis of American foreign policy making and an understanding of the main processes and actors that govern it within a domestic setting. Traditional and constitutional perspectives focus on the main state agencies as the drivers of foreign policy making, with policies resulting from a bargaining process among different interests in society. While there is a general agreement among scholars that over history the presidency has acquired more power compared to Congress, this understanding maintains that foreign policy making should be envisioned within a system of checks and balances that reflects the democratic principles in which American politics is enshrined.

Critical perspectives, however, take into consideration the role that the bureaucracy, elite knowledge networks, corporate elites, and policy-planning groups play in driving the process of foreign policy decision making. Rather than a competitive bargaining process, in this view foreign policy making is dominated in its planning and decision processes by elite groups that advance specific interests that do not accord with the interests of American society as a whole.

Over the course of the twentieth century, these contributed to shape and direct American foreign policy towards a mostly internationalist, interventionist position, which sees the United States involved in international affairs with the aim of maintaining a global hegemonic role, and a state of affairs favourable to American elites, rather than in the national interest.

By focusing on the role of 'orthodox' and 'unorthodox' actors involved in the making of foreign policy and how power is distributed among them, and by presenting an early account of the Trump administration's foreign policy, this chapter provides critical reflections on how power is distributed within the American political system and how this affects foreign policy making processes.

Foreign policy and historical accounts

Broadly speaking, foreign policy is the government's strategy to deal with other states. While foreign policy traditionally referred to matters of 'hard' power among nations—meaning war and military involvement—over the course of the last century the concept expanded to include issues that were lower on the foreign policy agenda, to the extent that to this day trade, environmental issues, health, and culture can all be envisioned within a foreign policy framework.

The Department of State (2016) declares that the United States' objectives abroad are 'to shape and sustain a peaceful, prosperous, just, and democratic world and foster conditions for stability and progress for the benefit of the American people and people everywhere'. Other objectives within the foreign policy framework include promotion of democracy; peace-keeping; export controls, including arms and disarmament issues; measures to foster commercial interaction with foreign nations; international commodity agreements; and international education (Committee on Foreign Affairs n.d.).

Wittkopf (1990) argues that there are four typologies of foreign policy positions: accommodationist; internationalist; isolationist; and hardliners. Focusing on how the United States' foreign policy has developed over time across these categories can also explain the development of the US as a hegemonic power over the past century (Hurst 2014). Until the Second World War, the United States had maintained a mostly 'isolationist' position, but with the intervention in that war, competition with the Soviet Union during the Cold War, and the development of the global war on terror in the early 2000s, the US adopted an increasingly internationalist position that has lasted till today. Despite differing positions held by presidents and within Congress on whether foreign policy should be conducted via consensual or coercive means, the United States has maintained a line of continuity across time, characterized by a broadly internationalist outlook of involvement in world affairs across a variety of issue areas. Clearly, President Trump's 'America first' election campaign challenges such an internationalist approach and threatens to substitute for it a narrower vision of America's global role as leader of the liberal international order.

Yet the expansion of the scope of foreign policy means that an increasing number of governmental agencies and personnel, even those traditionally concerned only with domestic affairs, have become involved with the processes of foreign policy making. With the growing emergence of 'intermestic' issues (issues that cut across the domestic and international spheres)—such as terrorism, immigration, or energy—the boundaries between domestic and foreign policy are becoming increasingly blurred. Focusing on how foreign policy has evolved over time therefore helps in an understanding of how the American political system developed, not only in terms of how foreign policy has become a major factor in defining American power in the world, but also in relation to how this has shaped intra-governmental dynamics and the relationship between the presidency and the Congress. In fact, within such an expanding framework, who oversees the system and how is this organized?

Constitutional accounts and institutional developments

The United States' Constitution of 1787 is rather vague in terms of foreign policy making and implementation. In envisioning the creation of a political system of government based on the democratic principle of 'checks and balances', the Constitution upholds the separation of power within three branches—the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary—to avoid the concentration of authority in the hands of a person, group, or agency.

This division of power is arguably reflected also in matters of foreign policy. While there is no

comprehensive description within the Constitution of how foreign affairs should be conducted, the text nonetheless assigns some key powers both to the executive (the presidency) and the legislative (the Congress) in relation to how foreign policy decisions should be carried out. Article II of the Constitution states that the president has the power to make treaties and appoint ambassadors to other countries, and as commander-in-chief holds authority over the armed forces. These powers are complemented by those of the Congress, which must approve treaties and nominations suggested by the president and, most importantly, has the power to declare war and holds control over the funding of the military. While the judiciary holds no specific powers, on some occasions the Supreme Court has been involved on matters of foreign affairs to ensure the integrity of the Constitution (see, for example, the *Prize Cases* of 1863 and the *United States v Curtiss-Wright Export Corporation* of 1936).

In fact, over time, this division of powers contributed to the development of tension between the legislative and executive branches concerning foreign policy matters. In a way, the struggle between Congress and the president can be understood as providing democratic legitimacy in the formulation of foreign policy envisioned within a constitutional framework of check and balances (Corwin 1957). However, on the other hand it has also brought to impasses or controversies concerning the United States' involvement in international affairs. For example, despite the crucial role that President Woodrow Wilson played in establishing the League of Nations in 1920, ratification of the treaty for accession was opposed by the Senate and the United States never formally entered the organization (see Box 9.1).

BOX 9.1: THE US FOREIGN POLICY ENVIRONMENT

Federal executive

Department of State (established 1789): organizes the foreign service; responsible for embassies, consulates, travel, passports, and visas; centre of diplomatic resources; specialist competence in international politics, foreign policy formulation and implementation; lead in the negotiation of treaties and supporting engagements with international organizations, key allies, and the international community.

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA, established 1947): traditionally the key agency tasked with the collection, analysis, and co-ordination of information concerning not only the behaviour and intentions of adversaries, but also the state of more generic conditions around the world that have an actual or potential impact upon American interests. Despite its civilian status, the CIA has not been confined to purely passive intelligence work concerning threat levels and warnings to policy makers, but has conducted special operations and covert actions in support of policy objectives.

Department of Defense (DoD, established under this name 1949): provision and maintenance of military forces to defend US citizens and interests; source of information and assessment on key security issues; force projection and deterrence; heavy economic footprint in contracts, bases, and employment; inter-service rivalries between Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines; key element in national security strategy and planning.

National Security Council (NSC, established 1947): advises the president on security issues and coordinates foreign and military policies, both domestically and internationally. The Council is chaired by the president, and among the members are the vice-president, the national security advisor, the secretary of state, and the secretary of defense. The joint chiefs of staff (senior uniformed leaders in the) and the director of the CIA are also automatically granted an advisory position to the Council.

Following his election in 2016, Trump extended membership of the NSC to the White House chief strategist, Stephen Bannon, a controversial figure associated with the extreme right and white nationalist organizations, and reorganized the membership of the cabinet-level committee of the NSC, the Principals Committee, by extending participation to the chief strategist and limiting the access of the joint chiefs of staff and the director of the CIA. However, these modifications were overturned in April 2017.

Department of Homeland Security (established 2002): compendium organization drawn from various pre-existing agencies and programmes following the 2001 terrorist attacks; responsibilities in the areas of counter-terrorism, border security, emergency planning, disaster management, immigration enforcement, cybersecurity; committed to

defending the US from acts of terrorism both inside and outside its borders.

US Congress

Committees: House Committees on Armed Services; Foreign Affairs; Homeland Security; Intelligence; Energy and Commerce; Financial Services; and Appropriations.

Senate Committees on Foreign Relations; Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; Intelligence; Armed Services; Commerce, Science and Transportation; Energy and Natural Resources; and Appropriations.

Foreign policy issues: Issues that have an international or global dimension, including trade, terrorism, health security, biological and nuclear security, gender issues, migration, capital flows, regional integration, nuclear proliferation, criminal behaviour (trafficking, slavery), sustainable development, energy resources, environmental degradation, food security, and climate change, as well as themes relating to overseas practices, international inequality, and global justice.

External players

Other actors involved directly or indirectly in foreign policy making, including foreign countries, international organizations, and institutions such as global norms and treaties, regulatory frameworks, and legal codes. Domestically, other players include media channels and outlets, think tanks, universities and research institutes, non-profit organizations, and interest groups including corporate business groups.

While Congress can indeed play an important role in directing foreign policy making, over time the presidency has been able to bypass its powers in crucial matters of foreign policy: the lack of congressional approval for the wars in Korea, Vietnam, or Iraq are clear examples of this. The rise of presidential power in the formulation of foreign policy has become a dominant pattern of American politics and in the understanding of how the United States' hegemonic position in the international system has developed. This also contributed to revived discussions on constitutional matters and on the transformation of the American government on issues of foreign policy where power, far from being distributed among the three branches, has become centralized in the hands of the executive, or in an 'imperial presidency'.

Theories of a 'unitary' or 'unilateral' executive in managing foreign policy are also supported by the fact that an increasing number of agencies within the president's office have become involved with foreign affairs matters. While the Department of State, created in 1789, is the main federal executive agency established to lead the country on issues of foreign policy, other departments including the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, the National Security Council, and the Central Intelligence Agency have become crucial actors.

KEY POINTS

- Foreign policy is a government's strategy to deal with other states.
- Analysis of how a foreign policy has changed can also explain how a country's global power has developed over time.
- Since the Second World War, the United States have maintained a mostly internationalist position—characterized by cooperation through international organizations and involvement in international affairs.
- The Constitution only partly specifies the division of power relating to foreign policy by assigning complementary powers to the presidency (executive) and the Congress (legislative), but the institutional environment involved in foreign policy making expanded considerably over the course of the last century.

Institutional influences on foreign policy making

As already mentioned, traditional/constitutional perspectives in the analysis of foreign policy formulation focus on the role that the main state agencies play in defining the processes of foreign policy making. Considering that the American Constitution leaves room for interpretation of how institutional settings can influence foreign policy processes, in 1974 Steven Rosenfeld wrote that 'no factor is more needful of fresh consideration in both practice and study of American foreign policy than its domestic underpinnings' (1974: 263), an observation that is still valid to the present day. This chapter will now turn to analyse in detail the evolution of the roles of the presidency

and Congress to understand how the processes of foreign policy decision making unfold.

The executive and the presidency

The infrastructure of the executive branch of the US government, organized in a system of agencies and departments associated with the president's office, constitutes the basis of foreign policy making. While the Constitution assigns the presidency with specific roles in relation to foreign affairs, it is clear that over time presidents have been able to acquire additional responsibilities not initially envisioned by the constitutional framework, to the extent that the executive leadership is essential to implement a successful foreign policy (Lindsay 1992). In this context, the concept of 'executive prerogative' underlines the power of the executive to exercise authority without congressional support, including in emergencies, in which the presidency may even act contrary to the Constitution.

As a matter of fact, some presidents, and especially those that are recognized as 'strong' presidents of the earlier years of the republic, such as Jefferson (in office 1801–9), Jackson (1829–37) and Lincoln (1861–5) have all played an active role in expanding the scope of the executive power in relation to national security and foreign affairs, often envisioned within a framework of 'emergency'. The *Prize Cases* (1863), already mentioned, set an important precedent in affirming that President Lincoln's decision to act against belligerent Southern states on the onset of the Civil War *before* the state of war had been declared by the Congress was constitutionally legitimate. The episode contributed to the development of narratives associating crises with executive action, essentially recognizing that under certain conditions the presidency could act legitimately albeit outside the constitutional framework. This understanding has been key in the expansion of executive power in relation to foreign policy making, especially after US intervention in the Second World War. As the figure of the president represents leadership, symbolizing the duty of the government to protect American interests and security, 'the widely-shared consensus among American leaders and the American public that the international environment demanded an active world role also contributed to the felt need for strong presidential leadership' (McCormick 2012: 157). The implications are twofold.

On the one hand, key agencies involved in foreign policy, namely the DoD, the CIA, and the NSC, were established in 1947–9 as the Second World War ended and a new world order unfolded under the power of the United States. While some presidents have been hampered in their expansionist ideals by the Congress (as, for example President Wilson in relation to the League of Nations—see Box 9.2), the increasing association of American *national security* with the achievement of *international security* has played an important role in concentrating power in the hands of the presidency. This was particularly amplified during the Cold War period, when the expansion of communism was seen as an essential threat to American values of freedom and democracy. The involvement of the US in several wars and military interventions since 1941, despite the Second World War being the last declaration of war Congress made, is an example of this. This is reflected also in the creation of additional bureaucracy involved in foreign policy making, including the Department of Homeland Security in 2002 and the increasing cooperation between the Department of State and the Department of Defense as main actors to shape the foreign affairs environment (Newsom 2000).

BOX 9.2: THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The League of Nations, generally considered to be the precursor of the United Nations, was an intergovernmental organization founded on 10 January 1920 following the Paris Peace Conference that ended the First World War.

Two years earlier, on 8 January 1918, President Woodrow Wilson spoke before Congress, where he presented his famous Fourteen Points to be used for peace negotiations in Paris. Point XIV outlined that

> A general association of nations must be formed … for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

Wilson's Fourteen Points are commonly regarded as the basis for Wilsonian idealism (or Wilsonianism), considered an early precursor to liberalism in international relations and foreign policy. Among other precepts, Wilson advocated for principles of self-determination, the spread of democracy, and the

achievement of international peace, security, and cooperation through international organizations. At the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, Wilson put forward a proposal for the establishment of the League of Nations (the so-called Covenant of the League of Nations), which was attached to the Treaty of Versailles. This included the much-debated Article X committing the parties to the Treaty to assist other members of the League in case of aggression or war.

When Wilson presented the Treaty of Versailles, including the Covenant, to the Congress for ratification, however, he encountered strong opposition. Led by the Republican Senate majority leader and chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee Henry Cabot Lodge, Congress opposed joining the League on the concern that this would have limited the United States' ability to defend its own interests internationally.

Following failed negotiations between President Wilson and Lodge on defining the powers of the Congress to declare war within the framework of the League of Nations, when put to a vote in 1920, the Treaty and the Covenant were defeated in the Senate by 49–35. Wilson left office in 1921 unable to convince the Senate to join the League of Nations, and the United States never formally entered it.

This shows how despite the prime role that President Wilson had in directing the establishment of the League of Nations and consequently in shaping the making of foreign policy, Congress had the powers to oppose such decisions deemed unfavourable to the United States' interests in the world.

On the other hand, the *personality* of the president is often regarded an important factor in determining the direction of foreign policy: 'it is really a combination of the characteristics of the presidency and characteristics of the individual occupying the presidency that provides the fullest understanding of that institution', as the president has the power to determine the importance, context, and timing of different issues (Nelson 2012). President G. W. Bush, who was suffering low public approval ratings before the 9/11 terrorist attacks, saw an increase in approval after he skilfully used narratives of fear and insecurity to mobilize resources and support, both among the public and the government. In a different context, the ability of President Obama to present himself as a fresh change to Bush's discredited administration by emphasizing positive cooperation, multilateralism, and soft power *while* maintaining a focus on hot issues such as the war on terror was crucial in ensuring his widespread support. In the same way, President Trump appealed to ideas of change and breaking from the past during his electoral campaign, presenting himself as an 'outsider' to a political system he was ready to drastically alter; this allowed him to gain popularity among those sections of society that felt left out by the political elite although, as we will see later, whether he will be able to deliver his promises has been increasingly questioned.

However, overall these developments have also contributed to a revival of the discussions on the constitutional powers of the presidency and the extent to which an actual separation of powers has held over time on matters of foreign policy. These discussions have developed mostly in relation to a 'unitary' and 'unilateral' executive and the extent to which the presidency's power are overcoming the barriers presented by the Congress in the making of foreign policy (see Box 9.3).

BOX 9.3: THE UNITARY EXECUTIVE THEORY

The 'unitary executive theory' suggests that the president has the authority to control the entire executive branch, potentially concentrating decision-making power in the hand of the president at the expenses of democratic and constitutional processes of checks and balances. Within a foreign policy framework, this implies that the presidency has the authority to overcome Congressional and/or judicial hurdles if it is believed to be for the benefit of the national interest.

The theory was discussed as early as the 1780s, but examples of its implementation can be observed in the Reagan administration, or in President G. W. Bush's foreign policy strategy following the 9/11 attacks.

Congress

The expansion of presidential powers on matters of foreign policy has not gone uncontested. Various scholars (Lindsay 1992; Leyton-Brown 1983) argue that Congress's role in foreign policy making should be analysed across different periods of time, whereby it acquired either a more accommodating or a more assertive role depending on the political circumstances and the president in power. While the presidency's primacy on matters of foreign policy is undeniable, it would be reductive to assume that Congress plays no role in defining such context (Lindsay 1992).

For example, during the 1970s, thanks to the growing public dissatisfaction with the United States' war on Vietnam, Congress imposed its authority by initiating new policy objectives or passing legislation restricting presidential action. For example, in 1973 Congress passed the War Powers Act, aimed at limiting the war-making powers of the president, requiring Congress be consulted whenever the president was ready to commit American troops for action. This so-called 'congressional activism' covered military activity, trade, aid, nuclear proliferation, human rights, and surveillance of executive agreements. A similar pattern of action can be observed also in the 1990s, as for example when Congress imposed sanctions on the Department of Defense's spending, or began monitoring intelligence agencies' cooperation with foreign actors. As a matter of fact, having oversight of funding and budget expenditure means that Congress holds the 'power of the purse' in relation to foreign policy making, by which congressional committees have the authority to review budgets and programmes of the foreign policy bureaucracies as well as to decide how funding might be spent, including restrictions to foreign aid spending, which in turn might affect other foreign policy objectives.

Commentators have argued that Congress's participation in foreign policy making increases the president's accountability by representing the views of the public on matters of foreign policy, and that Congress's position allows it to influence foreign policy making directly or indirectly. This is especially relevant when considering the crucial role that lobbying, which goes through Congress, plays in the American context. In addition, Congress can influence policy making through indirect means (Lindsay 1992) which is also reflected for example in the power of Congress to conduct investigations into specific foreign policy or security concerns, a power enforced by the significance that intermestic issues are acquiring in blurring the lines between domestic and foreign policy. In this way, issues of foreign policy that might have domestic repercussions can become object of discussion in Congress. Examples of such investigations include inquiries on the 9/11 attacks and on US detention and 'enhanced interrogation' (i.e. torture) programmes.

Another factor to consider is the issue of bipartisanship within Congress. While with the unfolding of the Cold War Congress had maintained a 'consensus' on matters of foreign policy, this started eroding in the 1970s, which has been seen by some as a leading cause for Congress's failure to influence foreign policy making (Hurst 2014; Rosenfeld 1974). However, if partisan opposition can organize resistance to presidential foreign policy initiatives, especially when the president's party is in congressional minority, this suggests that Congress's influence on foreign policy making could increase again in the future (Fleisher et al. 2000). This was evident during the Obama administration when Congress successfully prevented the president's attempt to close the detention facilities at Guantánamo Bay by blocking funds to transfer detainees.

In conclusion, while the authority of Congress on foreign policy matters has been bypassed on several occasions (the last time Congress actually declared war was in 1941), it is clear that Congress can still play an important role in the shaping and direction of foreign policy making.

KEY POINTS

- Over time, the presidency has acquired considerable power in relation to foreign policy, dominating its decision-making processes.
- The concept of 'executive prerogative' refers to the power of the executive to exercise authority without congressional support.
- A foreign policy strategy is often strongly associated with the figure and the personality of the president in charge.
- There has been an increasing association of American national security with the achievement of international security, favouring the concentration of power in the hands of the presidency in matters relating to foreign policy.
- Despite its 'junior' role, Congress has been able to remain a relevant actor within the foreign policy making environment, mostly through indirect means.
- The emergence of 'intermestic' issues and bipartisan dynamics within Congress can increase its scope for involvement in the foreign policy making process.

The 'unorthodox view': critical theories of power

The discussion on how the interlocking dynamics between the presidency and the Congress shape the making of foreign policy raises important normative questions in relation to power, how it is distributed, and how it is exercised.

Several theories have attempted to explain how American foreign policy has developed over time: for example, traditional theories of international relations such as realism or liberalism. However, a deeper analysis of how foreign policy making is carried out lies within those theories that focus on how power is distributed within the American political system and how other actors beyond the main institutional ones can play a key role in shaping and directing the foreign policy environment. Such 'critical' theories can therefore be helpful for digging deeper in analysing how the foreign policy decision-making process develops. The two main theories useful for understanding such dynamics are pluralism and elitism.

Pluralism

In the most general sense, pluralism argues that there is no dominant set of institutions directing the policy-making process (see Key quotes 9.1). This does not necessarily imply absolute equal distribution of power among the different actors participating in policy-making negotiations, but rather that the sharing of power among them results in a bargaining process that produces official policy. Rather than *anarchy* (lack of authority), pluralism implies a *polyarchic* distribution of power (power distributed among multiple actors) (Dahl 1961).

KEY QUOTES 9.1: PLURALISM

Pluralism, then, is the belief that democratic values can be preserved in a system of multiple, competing elites who determine public policy through bargaining and compromise, in which voters exercise meaningful choices in elections and new elites can gain access to power. Pluralism asserts that organised interest groups provide the individual with an effective way to participate in the political system by allowing diverse voices to be heard through membership in the organised groups that reflect different interests. Pluralists further believe that competition and negotiation among organised interests provides a balance of power that protects the individual from both competing interests and a 'tyranny of the majority'.

(Dye and Zeigler 1984: 11)

In relation to foreign policy making, this framework is reflected on two different levels of analysis. On the one hand, pluralism sheds light on how no agency *within* the institutional machine has *in theory* the power to overcome the other governmental institutions. Pluralistic accounts are therefore reflected in the constitutional distribution of authority concerning foreign policy, which assigns the presidency and the Congress with different sets of interlocking powers. This is especially reflected in the complementary powers that the legislative and the executive have on matters concerning declaration of war and command of the armed forces.

On the other hand, however, federal agencies are also influenced and made accountable by external groups, such as interest groups, that arguably reflect the position of the citizens on matters of domestic and foreign policy—this happens, for example, through lobbying or advocacy. One of the most notable examples in foreign policy is the role played by the so-called 'Israel lobby', composed of leading organizations such as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), which by raising money, bipartisan funding, and lobbying have been able to influence the American stance on matters concerning Israel and especially the strengthening of that state in the Middle East region. An investigation by the Center for Responsive Politics (2017) shows that overall pro-Israel groups have donated over $130 million to presidential and other election campaigns since 1990, and only in 2016 federal donations were set at a new record of more than $17 million, making the Israeli lobby one of the most influential interests groups together with the National Rifle Association (NRA) and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) in influencing policy making in the United States.

Pluralism is a useful theory for understanding how inter-group dynamics operate on different levels of

analysis, and how their basic competition for power and control can define policy-making processes while maintaining democratic principles (Dahl 1961). In fact, it is important to underline that pluralism accepts that not *any* group can enter the decision-making process, and that therefore rather than 'the people', *elitist organized interest groups* have the most direct influence over policy-making processes (Dye and Zeigler 1984). However, pluralism argues that while power might not be divided equally across society, it is nonetheless dispersed among different elites. This essentially supports a democratic vision of the American political system, as democratic principles can be preserved through competition among rival elites representing different public interests in society. In this way, 'policy-making has been "democratized" to a degree hitherto unseen. Special-interest groups—economic and ethnic—enter freely into the process' (Rosenfeld 1974: 272), allowing different sets of interests and priorities to shape the direction of foreign policy.

Elitism

However, the discussion on the distribution of power between the presidency and Congress inherently questions the core principles of pluralism and therefore of the organization of American power. While pluralism admits the existence of elites, it is nonetheless essentially different from *elitism* as a political theory. Pluralism believes that in some way, directly or indirectly, anybody can use the democratic tools of the American political system to influence the policy-making process; however, elitism argues that societies are divided between those who rule, and those who are ruled. A small minority, the elite, has therefore the power to decide public policy, including foreign policy, in such ways that this will not reflect the demands of the people, but the values of the elite. While classical elitism argues that society is dominated by one unified elite, plural elitism contends that several elitist groups from different sectors of society (political; economic; military; academic) influence the policy-making process by advancing specific interests and values. In general terms, elite theory therefore argues that only a minority of those having access to the foreign policy making process (be it through interest groups or governmental agencies) effectively have the power to influence it.

It is important to underline that terminology relating to elites has often acquired negative, and almost conspiratorial, connotations with relation to who effectively governs the country. The idea that there is a 'deep' or 'permanent' state composed of a network of individuals (usually former members of the government or the military) maintaining influence over elected politicians has gained supporters, especially with the presidential elections of 2016. More generally, there is an understanding that elites are closed groups whose members come from specific sectors of society (generally male, white, upper class, and educated in Ivy League institutions, sometimes referred to as WASPS—White Anglo-Saxon Protestants) representative of 'a tradition which extends across decades, and which both derives from and defines a conception of the United States' place in the world' (Greiner 2017). Consequently, thanks to their economic, human, and social capital that sustains the American political system, elites have the power to determine *who* has the ability to influence the foreign policy making process and *which* ideas are advanced in it, as well as to shape public opinion on such matter—thus eroding the democratic principles of American politics.

C. Wright Mills (2000), in his study of *The Power Elite*, suggested that the United States had become increasingly dominated by three elites—the military, corporate executives, and the federal executive. That concentration of power has undermined democratic processes of popular representation, including the Congress, and threatened world peace through the dangerous nuclear stand-off between the USA and the Soviet Union. Other elite theorists such as G. William Domhoff suggest that corporate elites demand that presidential administrations pursue policies designed to expand American global influence in the interest of corporate profit rather than national interests, frequently under the banner of spreading freedom or promoting democracy (Domhoff, 1967/2013).

While Marxism or hegemonic theories have focused on the implications that the spread of such American democratic values have had for world order and international relations, it is widely agreed that a 'foreign policy elite' composed of experts, officials, academics, and others specializing in foreign affairs shapes and directs foreign policy making (Hodgson 1973). Dye and Zeigler (1984: 7) affirm that 'elites may be more or less monolithic and cohesive, or more or less pluralistic and competitive. Power need not rest exclusively on the control of economic resources; it may rest instead on other leadership resources—organisation, communication or information'. This latter point is particularly important to emphasize, as the role and

influence that elites have in the foreign policy making process can be observed within different stages, such as consensus-building, policy- and agenda-planning, and policy decision making. While in most general terms those involved within the institutional machine of government—and therefore members of the three branches—are considered as 'the ruling elite', the situation is more multifaceted. Beyond the bureaucratic machine of the American political system, other actors including philanthropic organizations and corporate businesses can all be envisioned within an elite framework.

KEY POINTS

- Pluralism helps to explain how non-governmental actors can influence the (foreign) policy-making process, therefore perpetrating a democratic system of checks and balances.
- Pluralism accepts that power is not necessarily equally distributed but that it is nonetheless dispersed among different 'elite' interest groups that compete among each other and that indirectly allow people's participation in the policy-making process.
- Elitism argues that a small minority governs in such ways that the political process will not reflect the demands of the people, but the values of the elite.
- Different societal groups can contribute to such elitist system (the governmental bureaucracy, the military, corporate businesses, research institutes), but only a minority of people can effectively access it.
- Thanks to their ability to influence who accesses such system and which ideas are circulated, elites have been able to promote specific values that reflected their interests in the United States' position in the world.

Other actors in the foreign policy environment

The chapter will now turn to analyse how a few key societal groups, namely the bureaucracy, corporate business, and elite knowledge networks, can influence the development of foreign policy at different stages of its decision-making process, and how this has contributed to maintain a line of continuity over time in relation to foreign policy strategies.

Bureaucracy and 'the establishment'

In the context of government, the bureaucracy is the body of non-elected officials who have the responsibility of conducting the day-to-day administration of the programmes set out by the government. It is widely agreed that the bureaucracy is an actor per se with the power to direct and influence the course of public policy, and that it has acquired considerable independence over time (Dye and Zeigler 1984; Hodgson 1973). In fact, only major issues of foreign policy reach the higher levels of the executive, meaning that the majority of foreign policy decision are the result of bureaucratic 'pulling and hauling' and compromise.

What is important to understand is *who* is part of the bureaucracy, and to what extent the bureaucratic machine is used as a platform to spread specific ideas and values supported by the elite. Research on the 'revolving door' process has shown the cyclical relationship between the foreign policy bureaucracy and the corporate and elite knowledge networks, by which individuals, ideas and interests circulate between institutions or businesses and the ruling elite (Abelson 2014; Van Apeldoorn and de Graaf 2014; Parmar 2012). This also contributes to the creation of a 'culture' or 'identity' of the bureaucracy that ensures continuity in the objectives of foreign policy and in the means to achieve them (Drezner 2000). Since the end of the Second World War, this resulted mostly in the development of a foreign policy that supports an assertive US leadership in the world with a strong internationalist/interventionist outlook. This 'foreign policy establishment' therefore brings together ex-governmental officials, members of the military, corporate business, academics, and think tanks to shape and define foreign policy by maintaining a continuity of direction over time.

Considering that the foreign policy establishment is defined 'by a history, a policy, an aspiration, an instinct, a technique' (Hodgson 1973: 8), this also means that potential threats to such foreign policy 'culture' are often countered so as to maintain the status quo. For example, in March 2016 over 120 Republican foreign policy officers of the Reagan and Bush administrations signed an open letter opposing candidate Donald Trump on the grounds that he was unqualified to oversee American national security, as 'his vision of American influence

and power in the world is wildly inconsistent and unmoored in principle' (*Washington Post*, March 2016). While Trump eventually got elected, the open letter shows the organizational culture of the establishment in promoting a certain direction and style within foreign policy.

Corporate elites

Business elites are another crucial actor, as they are tightly interwoven with the foreign policy establishment in shaping policy-planning and decision-making processes through economic resources and business networks, thereby allowing the formation of an economic 'worldview' that shapes the overall direction of foreign policy (Van Apeldoorn and de Graaff 2014).

Processes or 'revolving doors' between Washington and Wall Street can be observed across different administrations regardless of the political party in power. This feeds on the idea of a 'US policy-planning network', to the extent that policy makers not only have a connection to the corporate elite, but also often can be considered an integral part of such elites, as it has been found that US foreign policy is heavily influenced by internationally-oriented business leaders (Jacobs and Page 2005). Research by Van Apeldoorn and de Graaff (2014) showed that between half and three-quarters of the foreign policy establishment within the Clinton, Bush, and Obama administrations had extensive corporate affiliations prior to entering the political sectors.

Corporate interests not only have influence in terms of 'recruitment' of personnel but also in how money is spent and towards which policies funds are directed. The crucial role that the 'military-industrial' complex (the close relationship between the military and the defence industry aimed at increasing the benefits and interests of both) can play in directing foreign policy towards a more expansionist United States was warned of by President Dwight Eisenhower in his Farewell Address in 1961, when he affirmed that 'we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex'. In addition to the defence industry, more recently financial and energy sectors have acquired increasing importance in defining US interests internationally.

This can be noticed in the US 'open door' policy, aimed at establishing an international economic system that favours free trade and open markets. While the development of the Bretton Woods regime with the creation of the IMF, World Bank and GATT (now WTO) institutionalized that system, American international support, often through military means, has been directed to political regimes that would uphold it often at the expense of human rights and democratic principles. Intervention in the Gulf region and the 'Asia pivot' of the Obama administration to favour 'the maintenance of peace, stability, the free flow of commerce and of United States influence in this dynamic region [through] an underlying balance of military capability and presence' (Department of Defense 2012: 2) are clear examples of this.

The elite knowledge network

The role that think tanks and research institutes play in influencing US foreign policy is often overlooked, as was once suggested by Richard Haass (2002), the president of the Council of Foreign Relations (CFR) and former director of policy planning at the US Department of State. The 'elite knowledge network', which includes research institutes, think tanks, and universities, plays a crucial role in shaping the foreign policy establishment, setting the agenda, and building the consensus on matters of foreign policy. This develops across three stages: by determining *who* accesses it, *which* ideas are suggested, and *where* these are discussed.

The first stage is the one of the 'revolving door process' (movement of personnel between roles as legislators and regulators and the industries affected by the legislation and regulation), as not only corporate leaders make up the body of the establishment; on the contrary, there are often tight interlinks with think tanks and the epistemic world (Van Apeldoorn and de Graaff 2014). Taking for example the current Trump administration, a considerable number of the staff he chose for both transition and government teams have ties with conservative think tanks, namely the Heritage Foundation or the American Enterprise Institute. Similar examples with different think tanks can be found within the Bush and Obama administrations, with the former referring mostly to the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) and the latter to the Brookings Institute and the Center for a New American Security (CNAS),

four out of five of whose board of advisors served in the Obama administration.

Beyond the direct expertise that such people can provide in terms of foreign policies, philanthropic institutions are often regarded as having a considerable indirect power by acting as the 'gatekeepers of ideas', spreading particular policy suggestions in relation to foreign affairs. In the 1920s, for example, the Council on Foreign Relations was backed by the Rockefeller Foundation in promoting a decidedly internationalist American foreign policy against isolationist positions, while a recent example shows the impact that academics have had on promoting the concept of 'democratic peace theory' underpinned by liberal internationalism as a justification for the 2003 invasion of Iraq (Parmar 2013). Publication of policy briefs and reports through which certain values and ideas are shared contribute to informing the public and the government, thereby supporting consensus-building processes on matters of foreign policy. This 'production' of knowledge, then, often constitutes the basis for blueprints, policy texts, or decisions advanced by the government.

Finally, by organizing seminars, conferences, and meetings to gather key policy makers to discuss ideas, think tanks contribute to the generating of agreements, facilitate talks on key issues of foreign policy, and more generally set its direction in a specific way. For example, in September 2014 the CFR invited Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif to discuss possible options on how to deal with the threat posed by so-called Islamic State; only a few months later, President Barack Obama's administration was reported as seeking to communicate with Iran regarding the war on so-called Islamic State, as it was revealed that the president had sent a letter to Iran Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in October 2014 emphasizing the shared interest in beating the terrorist organization (CNN 2014). This suggests that the discussions that think tanks facilitate could potentially have important implications also at the higher levels of the executive.

KEY POINTS

- The power of the 'foreign policy bureaucracy' has grown over time, contributing to the creation of a 'culture' or 'identity' aimed at generating an environment favourable to its own interests.
- The 'revolving door process' ensures a constant and closed flow of human resources to sustain the bureaucracy, allowing specific interests and values to be perpetuated.
- Corporate business leaders not only form the foreign policy establishment but also heavily influence policy-planning processes by allocating economic resources.
- The influence of corporate sectors, and especially the financial sector, is manifested also in the aim of the United States to establish an international economic order favourable to American interests.
- Elite knowledge networks favour the circulation of specific ideas within the foreign policy establishment, 'producing' knowledge often used by the government for its foreign policy strategies.

The Trump administration and the 'challenge' to the establishment

The Trump presidency has proved extremely controversial. This is not only because of the personality of the president himself, a businessman with no previous political experience who ran a contentious campaign, but also because of the ways in which he has handled important issues of foreign policy once in office.

Trump's position as president raises important normative questions concerning the American political system and the ways in which (foreign) policy making is directed and implemented, not to mention the whole notion of American identity and values, and its 'soft power'. This also relates directly to the analysis of issues concerning elitism and 'the establishment', especially because of how Trump presented himself, during his electoral campaign, as the 'anti-establishment' candidate ready to 'drain the swamp in Washington DC'. This section will focus on how the foreign policy establishment reacted to Trump's presidency and what this implies in terms of the distribution of power.

The 'Trump Doctrine': before and after the election

According to Dye and Zeigler (1984), policy makers stick with the same programmes over time because of the uncertainty of developing new or different approaches to specific issues. This argument is arguably simplistic because of the role that bureaucratic, corporate, and academic interests play in directing the making of policy (see the two previous sections).

However, after the end of the Second World War a clear line of continuity can be identified in how American foreign policy was carried out. The 'liberal internationalism' adopted at the onset of the Cold War could be seen as a compromise between an approach of international engagement, based on support for international institutions, free trade, and foreign assistance, and one of assertiveness, based on military spending and the use of force to maintain a status quo favourable to American interests (Hurst 2014).

However, during his electoral campaign Trump defied these narratives by presenting himself as an 'outsider' promising to change a corrupt and inefficient 'establishment', to the battle cry of 'Make America great again', which he supported by writing a five-point plan for ethics reform in October 2016. On matters of foreign policy, his vision was strongly influenced by the idea of 'America first' and the understanding that the US ought to put aside its internationalist position of political involvement in favour of a refocusing on domestic issues, such as unemployment and industrial production. This included the shift from a 'multilateral' to an isolationist United States on international matters; scrapping treaties such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) or the Paris Climate Change Agreement, which, by setting specific standards, arguably limited American industrial production; and renegotiation of membership to agreements such as NAFTA or NATO, which he called 'a disaster' and 'obsolete' respectively during his electoral campaign.

During the campaign, he emphasized the need to protect the interests of the American people and American security 'above all else', arguing that the establishment and past administrations (especially Obama's) had made America's foreign policy 'a complete and total disaster'. Criticizing the foreign policy establishment, during an address at the Center for National Interest in April 2016, Trump said that if he became president he would

> "look for talented experts with new approaches and practical ideas, rather than surrounding myself with those who have perfect résumés but very little to brag about except responsibility for a long history of failed policies and continued losses at war … We have to look to new people because many of the old people frankly [do not] know what [they are] doing, even though they may look awfully good writing in the *New York Times* or being watched on television."

(*New York Times* 2016)

By emphasizing his aim of 'putting the American people first again … on trade, on immigration, on foreign policy', Trump challenged the internationalist rhetoric supported by previous Republican and Democratic administrations, essentially arguing for a new American leadership to run America. Despite his lack of knowledge of political matters, and complicity in various political scandals surrounding the Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton, by framing himself as a paradigm-shifter able to bring the 'outsider' view into Washington, Trump won thanks to the votes of those of millions of mostly white working- and middle-class Americans who felt left out by the establishment. As a matter of fact, the *Washington Post* argued in April 2017 that 'in many ways, the election of Donal Trump could easily be read as a sign that American voters wanted their foreign policy orthodoxy upended'.

However, as of May 2017 Trump made major U-turns on key matters of foreign policy. While it is too early to draw specific conclusions on what these imply, they nonetheless offer important windows for reflection.

To begin, it is important to consider the people that Trump chose to initiate and conduct his administration. A few 'outsiders' with no previous governmental experience were assigned key positions within the White House and the foreign policy environment, most notably Stephen Bannon, a former Goldman Sachs banker and white nationalist, as White House chief strategist, and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner as senior advisor. The attempt of Trump to reconfigure the National Security Council and grant Bannon a permanent position within the group seemed to represent an initial step towards deeper reforms of the establishment, although various rumours emerged on whether this was Trump's actual idea or the attempt of Bannon, an anti-government 'economic nationalist', to acquire power within the administration. Within two months of the election, however, Trump overturned the changes, allegedly reflecting the growing influence of National Security Adviser H. R. McMaster seeking to avoid 'politicization' within the NSC.

The position of secretary of state was also assigned to a corporate man with no previous diplomatic experience, former ExxonMobil chief executive Rex Tillerson. While his close ties with Russia may have been the reason for Trump to nominate him as to favour dialogue on the Eastern front, the nomination nonetheless reveals Trump's reliance on the corporate

sector for political support. Beyond the foreign policy positions, the nomination of bankers from Goldman Sachs and other Wall Street institutions to higher cabinet positions clearly contradicts Trump's anti-Wall Street declarations within the election campaign. In addition, a considerable number of people from the G. W. Bush and even Reagan administrations joined Trump in his transition and government teams, suggesting a line of continuity at least in terms of direction of policy making within specific departments such as State, Defense, or Homeland Security.

Within this context, the Heritage Foundation is considered to be the most influential think tank in terms of impact on Trump's agenda. The role that Heritage is playing in directing foreign policy is revealed by the president of the think tank, Jim DeMint (also a good friend of Vice-President Mike Pence) when he affirms that 'for the last couple of years, we have been preparing to advise as well as to help collect a whole [catalogue] of people from all over the country who could help Trump accomplish his objectives' (CNN 2016).

This suggests that the think tank played a key role in providing experts, advancing policy propositions, and producing material that may have influenced Trump on policy matters after his election. Effectively, while Trump heavily relied on Heritage Foundation's suggestions for potential Supreme Court nominees to make his own nominations, on key issue of foreign policy Trump retreated from his positions, realigning them with the more general liberal internationalist ones of the foreign policy establishment. Major U-turns included a reconsideration of NATO as a no longer 'obsolete' institution, re-evaluation of China and Russia as strategic partners (positively in the case of China, negatively in the case of Russia), and a critical shift towards military interventionism, especially towards North Korea and Syria, going against his earlier condemnations of previous administrations on how these issues had been dealt with.

Trump's foreign policy in action: the strikes on Syria

The strikes carried out on Syria on 7 April 2017 provides an interesting example. After international indignation arose when a chemical attack believed to be carried out by the Assad forces killed several civilians, including children, on 4 April, President Trump authorized the launch of fifty-nine Tomahawks cruise missiles on a Syrian government airbase believed to be holding the warplanes involved in the attack. This was the first direct military action that the US government had taken against Assad's regime in over six years of civil war, and the first action in Syria taken by the new administration.

The peculiarity of this event lies in two points: on the one hand, it is essential to underline how Trump had been strongly opposed to the interventions in Syria carried out by the Obama administration, even arguing, in August 2013, that President Obama had to receive congressional approval before bombing Syria. On the other hand, the attack Trump authorised was not approved by the Congress, and, almost ironically, followed the same 'legal thinking' used by Obama during his own administration to overcome the Congressional hurdle (Goldsmith 2017).

The normative implications of Trump's intervention in Syria are important to consider. First, the Syria strikes show how episodes of violence, conflict, or war can be key triggers in driving the presidency's action in relation to a certain issue; as Trump repeatedly affirmed after the strikes, the use of chemical weapons by Assad on his own citizens was a line that could not be crossed and that directly threatened the 'vital national security of the United States'.

Second, the Syria strikes show how Trump effectively exercised the 'executive prerogative' against the war powers of the Congress, which not only allegedly contributed to re-establish the US position in the world as allies supported the intervention, but also to re-affirm and rebuild consensus on the direction of American foreign policy.

While many condemned the attacks, they were seen favourably across the political spectrum and especially by Republican voters, despite the 'America First' narrative of non-intervention. While some polls affirmed that support of action in Syria waned in case of involvement on the ground (Politico 2017), an investigation by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs (2017) revealed that 'when it comes to the broadest measure of globalism, a majority Americans of all political stripes said that the United States should maintain an active part in world affairs', therefore emphasizing alignment with the foreign policy establishment much discredited by Trump during his campaign. This is important when considering that 'for *both* elites and masses, the presidency provides a means of handling national crises—taking whatever actions are necessary in an emergency to stabilise the

nation, protect its security, and calm its citizens' (Dye and Zeigler 1984: 239, emphasis in original).

This discussion therefore seems to suggest that despite the narratives promoted during the electoral campaign, the first actions on matters of foreign policy taken by the Trump administration effectively reproduce principles and values that clearly support the vision of an internationalist United States.

KEY POINTS

- The election of Donald Trump as president of the United States allegedly challenged the mainstream nation's foreign policy and national security strategies
- In his first few months of office, President Trump effectively made some major U-turns on matters of foreign policy.
- The strikes carried out in Syria show an initial consolidation of the United States' internationalist position on foreign policy.
- Episodes of violence and conflicts can be key triggers in driving action in relation to a certain issue even in unexpected ways, through which the presidency protects the national interest and security.

Conclusion

What could therefore explain the shift of the Trump administration from a mainly isolationist foreign policy towards a more expansionist one?

Constitutional and traditional accounts on foreign policy are limited in providing an answer to this question, as they would focus primarily on the interplay between the presidency and Congress in the setting of foreign policy. While the inexperience of the president or the realization that once in the Oval Office things 'get real' are valid possible explanations, a more critical stance needs to be adopted to grasp the broader picture. In fact, analysing how various actors influence the foreign policy making process and how power is distributed within society can be useful to understand how such dynamics develop. For example, public opinion pressure is believed to have played a major role in influencing President Trump's decision to authorise the strikes on Syria. However, it could also be argued that elites operate a defence mechanism when they feel their interests are at stake, as 'basic changes in the political system occur when events threaten it [and e]lites, acting on enlightened self-interest, institute reforms to preserve the system and their place in it' (Dye and Ziegler 1984: 7). Rather than through specific reforms, arguably the establishment has been able to influence the ways in which Trump relates to foreign policy and consequently overturning the narratives of change that got him elected, reflecting how 'unless the power structure of American society itself changes, any radical change seems unlikely at best' (Van Apeldoorn and de Graaff 2014: 160).

Nonetheless, as international relations evolve and affect how the US understands its position in the world, analysing contingent episodes of foreign affairs such as crises and conflicts, the agency of the presidency in responding to them, and the socio-political structures in which it is embedded, is essential to understand how foreign policy making develops and which directions it might take.

QUESTIONS

1. Does the United States have a 'democratic' foreign policy?
2. Compare and contrast liberal, realist, and elitist approaches to US power
3. Do liberal values dominate US foreign policy?
4. Is the US president really in full control of foreign and national security policy?
5. What is the role of Congress in US foreign policy?
6. How do corporate elites influence American grand strategy?
7. What are the roles and influence of elite knowledge networks in US global power?
8. Does President Trump's 'America first' approach threaten the US-led international order?

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10

Regional shifts and US foreign policy

Peter Trubowitz

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Introduction

American statecraft has been in flux during the past two decades. External events—the end of the Cold War, the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq—have been primary drivers of shifts in strategy. But domestic developments have also been shaping the conduct of US foreign policy. Indeed, political polarization has been shaking the domestic foundations of US foreign policy, sorely testing bipartisan support for liberal internationalism—the overarching strategy that guided the United States from the Second World War through the end of the Cold War. With Donald Trump's election to the presidency, many now fear that the era of liberal internationalism is over.

This is not the first time that America has been deeply divided over foreign policy. Deep fault lines surfaced in the 1890s and 1930s, and debates over foreign policy took on strongly emotional and moral overtones, just as they do today. In each period, the conventional wisdom that politics in the United States 'stops at the water's edge' was betrayed by protracted and divisive conflicts over how the country should respond to the breakdown of the old international order, and to the emergence of new strategic realities and economic challenges. Questions of foreign policy became enmeshed in the nation's electoral politics. In each period, America's leaders experienced great difficulty in articulating a vision of the national interest that commanded broad domestic support.

Why do America's leaders find it so difficult to mobilize broad-based support for their foreign policies? Why is the nation's foreign policy so conflict-prone? Some scholars locate the source of conflict in America's political culture. They argue that Americans hold divergent images of what their nation is, or what it should be, and that these differences invariably give rise to profound disagreements over how and when America should use its power. Other scholars argue that America's divided constitutional order is the source of conflict over foreign policy. The 'weakness' of the American state, manifest in the sharing of foreign policy making powers between the White House and Congress, is considered to be, in Edwin Corwin's famous phrase, 'an invitation to struggle' for control over the authority to make foreign policy.

Despite their many and important differences, both approaches assume that the appropriate level of analysis is national: the focus is on *national* political traits or structures. They ignore what for many scholars of American politics is fundamental: regional difference. All politics may not be local, but as V. O. Key pointed out long ago, in the United States regions are the 'building blocs' of national politics (Key 1964: 229). Like E. E. Schattschneider before him, and Walter Dean Burnham after him, Key underscored the sectional dimension of national politics in the United States (Schattschneider 1960; Burnham 1970). These scholars showed that many of the great struggles in American history over domestic policy were also conflicts between *subnational* coalitions advancing conflicting regional agendas.

This chapter builds on this insight by showing how regionalism also impacts foreign policy. In contrast to accounts that grant primacy to ideas or institutions, it identifies America's *regional* diversity as the most important source of tension and conflict over foreign policy. I show that conflicts over the purposes of American power, as well as the constitutional authority to exercise it, are fundamentally conflicts over the distribution of wealth and power in American society among coalitions with divergent interests and claims on the federal government's resources. They are regional in nature, and they grow out of the uneven nature of the nation's economic development and integration into the world economy.

This argument is developed by analysing debates over American foreign policy in three different periods: the 1890s, the 1930s, and the current era. During the 1890s, the 'Great Debate' over imperial expansion in Latin America and the Pacific Basin pitted the industrial North-East against the agrarian South, with the West playing a decisive 'swing' role. A quarter of a century later, the urban North-East and the South found common ground in an 'internationalist' foreign policy agenda and waged a fierce battle against their 'nationalist' rivals in the rural West. At issue was whether the United States should assume a more assertive role in checking the spread of fascism in Europe and in promoting global economic recovery.

Today, sectional conflicts divide the nation again. What many define as a fight between 'liberals' and 'conservatives' over how to respond to the challenges posed by globalization and terrorism is more usefully understood as a conflict between two broad coalitions of interest: one based in the South and Mountain West; the other grounded in the North-East and Pacific Coast. This pattern of regional polarization, which developed long before 9/11, reflects a deepening division of the electoral map into so-called 'red' states that benefit from military spending, export promotion, and import liberalization, and 'blue' states that do not. Those differences go a long way toward explaining why a quarter-century after the end of the Cold War, the United States is still debating how it should define and pursue its interests in the world.

Regional interests and foreign policy

Regionally based political competition and conflict is one of the most distinctive features of American politics. Frederick Jackson Turner first identified the significance of regionalism in the United States, and since then a large literature has developed on its sources and impact on national policy. A common theme in this literature is that regionalism in American politics is rooted in the geographically uneven nature of economic growth and development.[1] In other industrialized nations, regional economic differentiation is often coterminous with ethnic or religious difference (see Box 10.1). While ethnic and religious difference is also an important feature of American politics, at the regional level political conflicts are grounded in conflicts of economic interest.

BOX 10.1: AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM? SECTIONALISM AMERICAN STYLE

In many countries, regionalism is associated with ethnic or religious difference. These political systems are typically studied within a centre–periphery perspective, where regionalism manifests itself in the form of protest by culturally distinctive peripheries against political and economic exploitation by the centre. While ethnic and religious diversity is also an important feature of American politics, it is most conspicuous and salient at the 'microregional' (neighbourhood and city) level. At the 'macroregional' level, the absence of the kinds of cultural cleavages present in other nations has meant that in the United States sectionalism is usually grounded in conflicts of economic interest.

Scholars identify a number of factors to explain these regional differences. Some emphasize geographic disparities in resources, markets, and the costs of factors of production. Others focus on the role that the federal government plays in shaping patterns of uneven regional growth and development. There is also an important literature on how the spatially decentralized structure of political representation in the United States reinforces regional differences that arise from uneven growth. Historically, when the nation's political parties have been rooted in sections of the country with significantly different economic interests, domestic competition over public policy at the national level has intensified. Popular images like 'Red America' and 'Blue America' capture this interplay of party and region. In the past, much of this literature focused on domestic policy. However, in recent years the effects of regionalism on foreign policy making have received increased attention. A central finding in this work is that regions that stand to benefit, politically as well as economically, from the projection of American power are likely to support more ambitious, expansionist foreign policies.[2] Politicians from these regions are the ones most apt to favour a strong American presence abroad and a powerful chief executive at home. Conversely, regions whose income, profits, or political standing at the national level depend on the home market, or are threatened by international competition, are less likely to support the 'overhead charges' of maintaining international openness: a powerful military, easy credit for foreigners, an open domestic market, and so on. Elected officials from these regions are the ones who are most likely to make the case for a more restrained and cost-conscious foreign policy and stress domestic priorities and needs.

Explaining deep and persistent conflict over US foreign policy requires some mapping of the nation's economic geography.[3] Functional position alone, however, is too blunt an instrument to explain fully how regional competition over foreign policy is played out in the national political arena. As mentioned, party politics also plays a role. Party leaders have a long if inglorious record of playing politics with the national interest. Within the structures of a two-party system, they have often used foreign policies to mobilize electoral support and marginalize political opponents. As I show in the cases below, explaining how regional foreign policy coalitions form also requires some attention to electoral geography and party politics.

KEY POINTS

- Regionalism is one of the oldest and most distinctive features of American political life.
- Regions that benefit, politically as well as economically, from the projection of American power are likely to support more ambitious, expansionist foreign policies.
- Historically, when the national parties have been rooted in regions with significantly different stakes in international openness, partisanship has intensified.

The great debate over expansionism

Few periods in American history had a more profound impact on the nation's foreign policy, or have enjoyed more attention by American diplomatic historians, than the 1890s. Having created a continental empire in the nineteenth century, Americans set their sights on more distant frontiers. As every textbook on American diplomatic history states, in the 1890s the United States became a great power, shedding its isolationist past and embracing a more assertive, outward-looking foreign policy geared to opening new markets in Latin

America and Asia. America built a modern battleship navy, transformed its protective tariff into a bargaining tool to open foreign markets, and extended its strategic reach through the acquisition of foreign lands.

America's turn toward empire

This shift in American foreign policy is often viewed as the inevitable result of the nation's rise as a world power. Such interpretations begin with the obvious: the country was growing at a spectacular rate. Between the end of the Civil War in 1865 and the beginning of the Spanish–American War in 1898, the population of the United States more than doubled, and the gross national product nearly trebled. As the national economy expanded, so did Americans' financial and commercial interests overseas. Once highly dependent on foreign capital, America's leading banks and corporations now aggressively looked overseas for investment opportunities. Even more impressive was growth in America's commercial trade. Between 1865 and 1898, exports expanded from $281 million to roughly $1231 million. While much of this increase came from agriculture, by the 1890s manufactures were rapidly closing the gap. The bulk of the industrial export trade went to less developed nations in Latin American and Asia. Industrial exports to Europe also increased but not nearly as much; agricultural goods, especially cotton and wheat, made up the single largest class of exports to the Old World.

Fears of overproduction and colonial encirclement fuelled Americans' interest in overseas expansion. Severe depressions in the 1870s and 1890s, and a somewhat milder contraction in the 1880s, contributed to the perception that foreign markets were essential to American well-being. Overproduction was seen as the cause of these crises, and each one sent more and more farmers and manufacturers in search of new markets to sell their surplus goods. The discontent and turmoil engendered by these economic downturns led many to view foreign markets the way an earlier generation had looked to the national frontier: as a 'safety valve' for economic and social problems. There was a growing conviction in the 1890s that continental expansion had reached an end, and this only underscored the sense of urgency that many felt about the 'export solution'.

Great power rivalry was also a source of great concern to many Americans. For most of the nineteenth century, the world economy had revolved around Great Britain. The world's banker, workshop, and policeman, Great Britain used its power to establish an international economic order which, at its peak, emphasized free and open trade. Beginning in the 1870s, this system started to fall apart. Economic crises in Europe and Asia led Germany, France, and Japan to contest British hegemony and turn to mercantilism and imperialism to revive their slumping economies and pacify domestic discontent. While great power rivalry, and the 'scramble for empire' it kicked off, did not pose an immediate threat to American security, it did raise questions about the country's ability to guarantee access to its budding export trade to South America and Asia in the near and long term.

These were fundamentally questions about means. If most Americans by the 1890s favoured the goal of commercial expansionism, they disagreed sharply about the appropriate methods: would the acquisition of foreign lands (e.g. Hawaii, Cuba, the Philippines) and a larger navy be needed to promote expanded trade or could America's foreign trade expand without political and military burdens? Should new economic opportunities be sought in underdeveloped or advanced regions, in South America and Asia or in Europe? On these questions of means, consensus gave way to intense domestic conflict and political rivalry. The critical fault line ran along sectional lines. On one side stood the industrial North-East, and on the other, the agrarian South. In between lay the West.

Sectional bases of the conflict

Many factors explain why expansionism divided the country so sharply along sectional lines, but one was central: the economy. The northern and southern economies differed enormously. Despite the development of a *national* economy after the Civil War, the United States in the 1890s remained in many ways a single nation state with two distinct regional economies: one specializing in manufacturing, the other in agriculture. This meant that these regions had very different things to sell on the world market. It also meant that their elected representatives in Washington had quite different ideas about where America should cultivate commercial ties. Seeking outlets for its surplus manufactures, the industrial North-East looked primarily to non-industrialized areas of the globe, particularly South America and Asia. By contrast, the

agrarian South was highly dependent on industrial markets for selling its raw materials. It looked to Europe for expanded trade.

Where to expand was one thing; *how* to expand was yet another. For the Republicans, who dominated the North-East, a neo-mercantile strategy that put a premium on overseas bases and naval power had distinct advantages. For starters, the Republican North-East was home to the country's most powerful industrial, financial, and commercial interests—the very interests that had the biggest stake in securing greater access to, and control over, markets in Latin America and Asia. They viewed territorial expansion and naval power as two sides of the same coin. Naval power, Republicans argued, was needed to promote the spread of American commerce overseas; establishing a strategic presence in places like Hawaii, Cuba, and the Philippines was necessary to enhance the Navy's ability to project power. The Republican case for imperial expansion was thus both economic and strategic.

It was also a way for northern Republicans to advance partisan interests. Empire building was a way of addressing the needs of hard-pressed workers. The modernization of the Navy meant jobs for northern workers, which in turn meant votes for northern politicians. A strategy of territorial expansion also helped Republican leaders to shore up and consolidate political support among industrialists, bankers, and merchants who were interested in expanded trade and investment. Additionally, northern Republican leaders found the issue of expansionism helpful at the ballot box, using jingo nationalism to mobilize their partisans at election time and silence discontents. It certainly was not the first time in American history that elected leaders played politics with the national interest.

Expanding the capacity of the federal government to project power abroad also helped to expand the Republican Party's electoral base at home. Republicans used the lure of naval expenditures to win support along the Pacific coast. In the rural West, efforts to open markets in Latin America through tariff reform served to enhance the Republicans' appeal among hard-pressed western farmers, who viewed Latin America as an outlet for their surplus foodstuffs. Expansionism had a hard edge as well. Republicans used it to split the western and southern branches of the radical agrarian movement known as the Populists—the most serious political threat to Republican rule in the 1890s.

All of this helps to explain why the South so vigorously opposed the North-East's foreign policy agenda. While the North-East and parts of the West could hope to realize gains from a strategy of imperial expansion, the agrarian South could not and, in fact, did not. The South was more dependent on international markets than any other region in the country. Not surprisingly, southern politicians were among the most vocal proponents of expanded trade. For the South, however, there was a key difference: the Democratic South required industrial markets for their goods and thus had powerful reasons for avoiding policies that might provoke or exacerbate great power tensions and, thereby, threaten American access to the great industrial markets of Europe among the industrial nations there. Policies that challenged British commercial dominance in the southern half of the western hemisphere raised potential risks for the South.

For the North and South, the decline of British hegemony and the rise of imperial rivalry meant very different things: for the former, it opened up possibilities for commercial expansion; for the latter, it threatened an already-weakened liberal trading order on which the South was vitally dependent. This is why southern lawmakers in Washington advocated free trade and also helps to explain why they opposed building a powerful navy. A more powerful military posed other risks for the South as well. Twenty-five years after the end of the Civil War, the South was still very much a 'colonial appendage' of the North. Many of the region's leaders viewed military expansionism as a way to keep the South in tow. Others saw anti-expansionism as a means to deflect the Populist appeal to southern farmers. For every northern Republican who reminded Populists that foreign markets were the answer to their woes, there was a southern Democrat claiming that the seizure of 'tropical lands' like Hawaii would mean an influx of 'cheap coolie labour' that would threaten their livelihoods. Preaching the doctrine of 'white supremacy' was one way to deflect the Populists' appeal to southern farmers.

Expansionism abroad; hegemony at home

America's emergence as a great power was forged in the crucible of domestic political struggle (see Box 10.2). Often depicted as a contest between competing visions of America's purpose in the world, the conflicts over expansionism in the 1890s were

bred on conflicts of interests. The stakes were high. Those in the North-East who stood to gain the most faced the challenge of mobilizing a domestic political coalition broad and stable enough to overcome the South's resistance. The key to success lay in the West, and this was not lost on Republican leaders. Indeed, the Republicans' foreign policy agenda is best seen as part of a larger electoral strategy in the 1890s that was designed to exploit sectional differences in the agrarian periphery and to prevent an alliance against the North-East.

BOX 10.2: QUO BONO? THE GREAT DEBATE OVER AMERICAN IMPERIALISM

Debates over foreign policy are not just about the world 'out there'. They are also about the balance of political power inside the United States. In the 1890s, as during other periods of the nation's history, politicians viewed foreign policy issues against a larger political canvas. The issues of naval spending, territorial expansion, and tariff reform were debated in terms of their impact on each region's overseas commercial interests and on post-bellum political arrangements that continued to make the agrarian South a 'colony' of the industrial North-East. Who stood to gain politically and economically from an expansionist foreign policy, and who stood to lose, was the central question.

Southern Democrats, well practised in the art of sectional politics, were wise to the game. Being able to do something about it was another matter. In politics, as in war, there are objective realities, and in the late 1890s the possibilities for a southern–western alliance over foreign policy were remote. The West was not as dependent on foreign markets as the South; its principal market was at home, not abroad. Policies that challenged British dominance were thus less risky for the West than the South. Moreover, because it was not as dependent on foreign markets as the South, western lawmakers could us their votes in Congress on issues of importance to the North-East—naval spending, foreign bases, tariff reform—to win concessions on domestic policy matters such as currency reform, railway regulation, and monopoly control that were of great importance in the trans-Mississippi West.

So it was that the West threw its weight behind the Republican North-East's foreign policy agenda. The story of America's rise as a great power is thus also a story about how the Republicans established hegemony at home. With the exception of Woodrow Wilson's presidency, Republicans would control the machinery of national government for the next thirty years. Indeed, it took the full force of the Great Depression to destroy the regional alliance between the North-East and the West that formed the backbone of Republican political power. The depth and breadth of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's stunning victory in the 1932 presidential contest created new possibilities for a sectional alliance spanning the Mason–Dixon line (the line historically separating the North from the South) and, in so doing, offered a new opportunity to redefine the purposes of American power.

KEY POINTS

- The 'great debate' over expansionism in the 1890s pitted the Republican North-East against the Democratic South. In between lay the West, the 'swing region' in late nineteenth-century American politics.
- The critical issues of naval spending, territorial expansion, and tariff reform were debated in terms of their impact on each region's overseas commercial interests and on post-Civil War political arrangements that continued to make the South a 'colony' of the North-East.
- In the battle between the North and the South, the key to success lay in political alliance with the West. Recognizing this, northern Republicans, who controlled the machinery of the national government, fashioned a foreign policy platform that enabled them to capture western support for their expansionist cause.

The struggle over internationalism

The 1930s were years of upheaval and change in America's foreign relations. During this tumultuous decade of depression and war, the United States went from a country that defined its interests in largely hemispheric terms to a nation that saw itself as a global power, with far-flung interests and international responsibilities. The raw, assertive nationalism that had so often characterized America's foreign policy during the preceding quarter-century was abandoned in favour of a new role for the United States, where Washington took the lead internationally in liberalizing the world economy and guarding against the kind of international breakdown that had led to one of history's longest depressions and one of its worst wars (see Box 10.3).

BOX 10.3: FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT AND THE GREAT TRANSFORMATION

When Franklin Roosevelt was inaugurated in March 1933, twelve years of Republican-dominated foreign policy came to an end. During the 1920s, laissez-fairism was America's credo in foreign as well as domestic policy. Instead of looking for ways to capitalize on America's tremendous power after the First World War, Republican presidents throughout the decade looked for ways to minimize American involvement in the affairs of other countries, especially in continental Europe. Although Washington would continue to promote commercial expansion abroad, as it had since the 1890s, the Republican administrations of Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover maintained a low political-military profile overseas and for the most part eschewed the kind of multilateralism that Franklin Roosevelt and the Democrats would champion in the 1940s.

America's internationalist turn

No figure looms larger in this transition to internationalism than Franklin D. Roosevelt. Often remembered as a great innovator on the domestic front, Roosevelt was also an extraordinary statesman. Certainly, few in the 1930s had a better appreciation of the perilous international situation confronting the United States. As early as 1933, Roosevelt began urging that he should be given the authority to impose economic sanctions to deter German and Japanese military intimidation and expansionism. The new president also lost little time experimenting with ways to revive the world economy and promote foreign trade. As the political crisis in Europe and Asia deepened in the 1930s, again it was Roosevelt who made the case for giving Britain and others the military means to defend themselves against the Axis powers and rearming the United States itself.

In all cases Roosevelt would have his way with Congress, but not before the country endured one of the most bitter fights over foreign policy in its history. From Japan's seizure of Manchuria in 1931 to Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, to the Nazi occupation of France in 1940, America's leaders fiercely debated *how* the United States should respond. Policy differences in Washington became less tractable and debates over how the nation should respond to international events became hopelessly embroiled in fights over means. Were the new governmental mechanisms Roosevelt was proposing needed to restore the world economy and safeguard against another breakdown? Should the United States assume a more assertive role in deterring expansionism and checking aggression? These were the questions that divided America in the 1930s.

As in the 1890s, fights over foreign policy in the 1930s were inextricably linked to domestic conflicts of interest. So were debates over 'entangling' America in foreign rivalries. Once again, arguments for and against an assertive foreign policy had direct implications for the domestic distribution of wealth and power. What changed, and dramatically so, was *who* lined up on each side of the battle line. This time, it was the West, not the South, that led the fight against the projection of American power—a battle that it, like the South in the 1890s, would lose. In the 1930s, the South favoured a vigorous assertion of US leadership in world affairs, a position it ironically now shared with the North-East.

Depression, militarism, and the North–South alliance

Once deeply divided over foreign policy, North and South found common cause in the 1930s fight against economic nationalism, military intimidation, and imperial expansion. However much northerners and southerners might disagree on the rights of African-Americans and organized labour, sectional rivalry stopped at the water's edge. What explains the rise of a new foreign policy coalition that crossed the once impenetrable Mason–Dixon line? Why did the once-powerful alliance between the North-East and West break down? Although many factors contributed to this domestic realignment over foreign policy, much is explained by a single development: by the late 1920s, the North-East was far more deeply integrated in, and deeply dependent on, the world economy than it had been in the 1890s.

America's dramatic rise as a mature industrial and financial power in the first quarter of the twentieth century is largely a story of the North-East. The First World War had transformed the world economy and America's place in it. As a result of the war-inflated economic boom, the national trade surplus climbed to over $3.5 billion in 1917, with manufactured goods accounting for over 60 per cent of total exports. Foreign direct investment also grew rapidly. The nations of Europe needed foreign capital to fund their recovery from the ravages of the First World War; American investors

needed foreign outlets to dispose of surplus capital. America's largest corporations kept pace with the nation's big Wall Street banks. Once relatively insignificant in the American economy, the nation's overseas assets had become equal to over one-fifth of the gross national product by the time of the 1929 Wall Street crash. Although less dramatic, the growth of America's overseas trade was also important. More significant, the composition of this trade changed radically. In the past, the United States had been chiefly an exporter of primary goods to Europe. While cotton remained the leading export commodity, by the 1920s industrial sectors such as automobiles, machinery, and iron and steel had a considerable stake in foreign markets.

As the country's position in the world economy changed, America's leaders reassessed the nation's role in world affairs. Incentives to do so were especially strong in the North-East, where most of the wealth and prosperity generated by the rapid economic growth in the country's overseas trade, investment, and lending was concentrated. With roughly half of the national population, the region stretching from southern New England to the Potomac and west to the Mississippi produced over two-thirds of all manufacturing jobs in the country. More impressive still was the region's productivity. Seventy-five per cent of the total value added in manufacturing came from the manufacturing belt, and most of that was concentrated in the region's powerful industrial and financial centres: Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and New York.

Once a part of the country that depended on economic protection from foreign imports, America's 'manufacturing belt' was now the core region of the world economy, eclipsing the great 'iron triangle' in Europe that ran from Stuttgart to Antwerp to Paris. Hitler's barter system in *Mitteleuropa* and Japan's drive for a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere promised nothing good for a region whose representatives now favoured freer trade, open access, and capital mobility. It is thus not surprising that the urban North-East was at the vanguard of support for reviving and liberalizing the world economy, or that its elected officials in Congress now looked to their colleagues from the Deep South rather than the trans-Mississippi West to build a domestic coalition strong enough to sustain a change in international direction.

By any measure, the South was more committed to a vigorous assertion of American power overseas than any other part of the country. Opinion polls consistently showed southerners to be more internationalist and interventionist than non-southerners. The vast majority of the region's newspapers endorsed Roosevelt's foreign policy, even though many took exception to his domestic policies. Southerners even led the country in volunteer enlistment in the armed services. These sentiments were widely shared by the region's representatives in Washington. No region of the country more avidly supported a 'get tough' strategy toward the Nazis than the South.

Southern support for a more ambitious and decisive foreign policy sprang from multiple sources. Party politics tell part of the story. Roosevelt was remarkably popular among southern voters, and he swept the South by huge margins in each of his runs for the presidency. Yet party loyalty and Roosevelt's personal charm alone cannot explain southern policy choices. The South was a region that depended heavily on exporting commodities, especially cotton, to world markets, and in this regard little had changed since the 1890s. And this explains why most southerners viewed the spread of economic nationalism in the 1920s and 1930s with alarm. For them, the collapse of the liberal European-oriented world system presented a fundamental threat. 'However else the crisis of that world might have been viewed by others,' writes one scholar, 'the articulate South saw Nazi aggression as a dagger thrust at the heart of this system' (Seabury 1957: 136). If Germany defeated Britain, Hitler and his Axis partners would establish economic hegemony over the European continent and divide the world into exclusive spheres of influence. If Hitler were not stopped, he would close the doors of Europe to American exports and move against US commercial interests elsewhere.

If internationalism was the credo of the agrarian South, isolationism was the ideology of the West. The same polls that ranked southerners as Roosevelt's strongest supporters on foreign affairs showed westerners to be his toughest critics. Westerners were generally more sceptical than other Americans about the virtues of foreign trade, military preparedness, and aid to Britain, and they were less willing to spend American blood and treasure to check Germany's or Japan's drive for hegemony in Europe and Asia. Isolationism reigned supreme in the 1930s in the Great Plains and Mountain West. Western isolationists, steeped in the region's agrarian traditions, looked above the Mason–Dixon line and found allies in other parts of rural America.

Western views were well represented on Capitol Hill. No elected officials defended isolationism more passionately than those from the rural West. Though this was often attributed to ignorance, backwardness, and

parochialism, westerners opposed internationalism for very concrete reasons. Unlike the agrarian South, the rural West looked primarily to the domestic market for its prosperity. Wheat growers, who produced the region's leading farm export, sold less than 20 per cent of their crop abroad each year. Producers of other leading crops in the West were even less dependent on overseas markets. Having less at stake in Europe than the South or the urban North-East, it is thus not surprising that the rural West also felt comparatively less urgency in aiding the Allies or expanding the nation's capacity to project military power overseas.

Politics reinforced western scepticism toward internationalism. No part of the country was more susceptible to claims that American and British bankers had dragged the United States into the First World War. The vast majority of the region's farmers held Wall Street in low repute, and London's standing in the region was not much higher. Few westerners attached much credence to the notion that American and European security interests were interdependent, or to the idea that Britain was America's 'first line of defence'. In western eyes, such talk was nothing more than self-serving British propaganda and Ivy League sophistry. Calls for military mobilization were greeted with the same suspicion.

One consequence is that the Republican Party's hold on the region weakened during the 1920s. The national political parties were always held in low repute by large numbers of western voters, many of whom viewed the parties as instruments of powerful eastern interests. The Republican Party had carried the region in most presidential contests since the 1890s, but the West's support was always fragile and variable. As the Republican-dominated North-East moved in the direction of internationalism in the 1920s, it became increasingly difficult for the party's leaders to broker intra-party compromises over foreign policy. In fact, Herbert Hoover's efforts to do so by pursuing 'semi-internationalism' only exacerbated tensions within the party. By the time Franklin Roosevelt took office in March 1933, the Republican Party was in tatters: deeply divided along regional lines and incapable of offering a programmatic response to the economic and political dislocations caused by the Great Depression.

Internationalism as party-building

Republican losses were Democratic gains. Just as the internationalization of the urban North-East weakened the sectional bases of the Republican coalition, it created new possibilities for political alliance that Roosevelt and the Democrats were quick to exploit. In the past, Democratic politicians had faced an uphill battle in the staunchly protectionist and Republican North-East. By the 1930s, however, internationalist principles like free trade and collective security were no longer anathema in the region's big urban metropolises. On the contrary, as Roosevelt came to realize, internationalism could be used to broaden the Democratic base in the North-East and to weaken the Republican Party by exacerbating sectional rivalry within it. Economic nationalism, once the Republican elixir, now divided the party. Still heavily Republican, the eastern establishment advocated liberal internationalism. Western Republicans were nationalism's staunchest supporters.

For Roosevelt there were thus huge political advantages in moving decisively toward internationalism. The Democrats were now well positioned to reap the rewards of the urban North-East's internationalization and the internecine struggles within the Republican Party it touched off over international trade. Because core elements of the Democratic and Republican parties now stood to benefit politically as well as economically from a commitment to maintain order, stability, and openness on the Eurasian land mass, their elected representatives had a strong incentive to support Roosevelt's efforts to stabilize the world economy and prevent the spread of nationalism and militarism overseas. In sum, America's internationalist turn rested on political facts *inside* as well as *outside* the United States.

American efforts to stabilize the international environment began in the 1930s. An even greater effort occurred after the Second World War. From the late 1940s onward, American policy makers sought to rebuild the world economy along liberal lines. They also worked to ameliorate Europe's chronic geopolitical troubles by encouraging economic integration, interdependence, and growth. The Marshall Plan, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) were all part of this larger effort aimed at liberalizing the world economy and preventing the kind of international breakdown experienced in the 1930s. Under US leadership, new governmental mechanisms were created to regulate the world economy, new institutions and agencies were established to disperse American economic relief, and new military means were developed to strengthen the nation's presence overseas and to deter other nations, most conspicuously

the Soviet Union and China, from taking advantage of political instability on the Eurasian land mass.

The domestic political viability of America's liberal internationalism depended on the alliance between the North-East and the South that Roosevelt forged in the 1930s. From the Second World War to the Korean and Vietnam wars this alliance afforded America's presidents, Republican and Democratic alike, considerable latitude in managing the nation's foreign policy. Then, around the 1970s, the first cracks in the domestic foundations of liberal internationalism appeared. While it would not be until later that the regional and party battle lines would be redrawn, the international and domestic processes that fractured the North–South alliance made it increasingly difficult to manufacture consensus over foreign policy.

KEY POINTS

- During the Great Depression, the key question was whether or not America should assume an active role in rebuilding the world economy and checking the spread of fascism in Europe and Asia.
- Internationalists from the urban North-East and the agrarian South favoured active American international leadership. Because this coalition spanned the Mason–Dixon line and included Republicans as well as Democrats, it overwhelmed nationalist opposition in the West and formed the foundation of the Cold War consensus to come.
- In the 1930s, as in other periods of American foreign policy, politicians from different parts of the country sought to equate regional interests with the national interests. Foreign policy issues were debated in terms of their immediate impact on regional prosperity and their longer-range regional political and economic consequences.

American primacy and the 'new sectionalism'

With the end of the Cold War, that domestic challenge only became more difficult. While the United States enjoyed unrivalled power internationally, its political ability to convert its power into influence rapidly diminished. Political fissures over foreign policy that had opened up two decades earlier became more acutely partisan after the collapse of the Soviet empire. Republicans from the 'red' states of the South and Mountain West espoused fundamentally different views about the purposes of American power from elected officials from 'blue' states in the North-East and along the Pacific Coast. Contrary to all expectations, those foreign policy differences have only hardened since 9/11. Indeed, today Republicans and Democrats are more divided over foreign policy matters than at any time since the Second World War.

End of consensus

For nearly three decades after the Second World War, the nation's foreign policy was based on an alliance between the North-East and the South. These regions were the earliest and largest beneficiaries of the policies of foreign aid, forward defence, and liberal trade that were aimed at the promotion of an open, interdependent world economy, and at the Cold War isolation or 'containment' of nations that threatened it. Because this coalition was rooted in the regional power base of the Democratic Party and the powerful eastern wing of the Republican Party, it provided an institutional framework for a bipartisan foreign policy. Party politics did not stop at the water's edge during the Cold War years; rather, shared interests kept partisanship in check (see Box 10.4).

BOX 10.4: THE COLD WAR CONSENSUS

American leaders were able to mobilize broad domestic support for their foreign policies during the quarter-century that followed the Second World War. Presidents enjoyed considerable latitude, if not deference, on matters of foreign policy—certainly more than they did on domestic policy issues. The absence of foreign policy conflict during this period did not mean that politics stopped at the water's edge. Rather the Cold War consensus rested on a bipartisan alliance that spanned one of America's great political fault lines: the Mason–Dixon line. Northern and southern lawmakers found common cause in Cold War policies aimed at containing the Soviet Union and promoting international economic openness. As that political alliance began to come apart in the 1970s, America's leaders, Republican and Democratic alike, found it increasingly difficult to mobilize and sustain bipartisan support for their foreign policies.

That bipartisan coalition lasted until the 1970s, when it began to fall apart under the combined weight of three developments: mounting social tensions

triggered by the Civil Rights movement and the Vietnam War, the economic decline of the industrial North-East and the rise of the so-called 'sunbelt' states of the South and West, and the shift in the Republican Party's centre of gravity from the North-East to the Mountain West. The first two drove North and South apart. The third created opportunities for coalition-building between West and South. As the Republican Party aligned itself with the rapidly growing states of the Mountain West, it searched for allies in the country's other late developer, the South.

During the 1970s economic activity began to shift from the North-East to the South and West. Many factors contributed to this process: the diffusion of large-scale, high-technology production, lower transportation costs, regional disparities in labour costs, energy prices, and local tax rates. No less important were the uneven consequences of the erosion of American commercial power in the international economy. The North-East suffered disproportionately from the rise of Europe and Japan in the 1970s as economic competitors. Spatial disparities in federal spending and federal tax policies also played a role in accelerating, if not encouraging, this regional shift in power. Federal expenditures and tax policies spurred the growth of sunbelt cities such as Atlanta, Miami, Houston, and Phoenix while exacerbating economic difficulties in the older north-eastern centres of Boston, Chicago, Detroit, and New York. The migration of industries, jobs, and people from the manufacturing belt to the sunbelt created 'structural conditions' conducive to political alliance between West and South. Republican stratagems made it a reality. Beginning in the late 1970s western Republicans like Ronald Reagan aggressively pushed domestic and foreign policies that were now antithetical to the interests of the declining North-East. In foreign policy, the Republicans' long-standing commitment to anti-communism was grafted onto a 'new' foreign policy agenda that favoured less international regulation, a strong national defence, and 'bolder, more assertive' leadership. By playing on these and other issues (such as race), Republicans wrought havoc in the Democratic Party. Southerners left the party in droves.

In the 1980s the Democrats' electoral stronghold narrowed to the ageing North-East. No longer restrained by the demands of coalition-building, the Democratic leadership adopted a foreign policy strategy that played well in the northern 'rustbelt' and along the Pacific Coast: retrenchment. While most Democratic leaders continued to favour American participation in international institutions, they urged greater restraint in the use of military force and a smaller defence establishment. On foreign economic policy, Democrats edged away from their long-standing commitment to free trade, capital mobility, and equal access. Demands for 'fairer trade', job retraining, and industrial policy became as obligatory in Democratic politics as demands for freer trade, 'fast track procedures', and 'FTAs' (free trade agreements) were in Republican circles.

Red America versus Blue America

By the time the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, the domestic underpinnings of liberal internationalism had given way. In its place arose two new coalitions: one, centred in the South and Mountain West, that was dedicated to the projection of American power and the primacy of national security; the other, based in the North-East and Pacific Coast, committed to reducing America's geopolitical footprint and investing greater resources on the domestic side of the ledger. Much of the struggle over foreign policy since the end of the Cold War originates here, in the deepening divide between what political pundits dubbed 'Red America' and 'Blue America' (see Box 10.5). In contrast to what happened in the 1890s and 1930s, when new hegemonic blocs arose out of the struggles set in motion by uneven growth, the regional and partisan divisions that emerged before the end of the Cold War only intensified afterwards.

BOX 10.5: REGIONALISM REDUX: 'RED' AMERICA VERSUS 'BLUE' AMERICA

America is today experiencing the return of important regional divides; partisan differences are again running along regional lines, making it more difficult for the country's leaders to mobilize broad and consistent support for their foreign policies. One regional coalition, centred in the South and Mountain West, is dedicated to the projection of American power and the primacy of national security; the other, based in the North-East and Pacific Coast, is committed to reducing America's geopolitical footprint and investing greater resources in domestic programmes. In contrast to the 1890s and 1930s, when new hegemonic blocs arose out of the regional struggles set in motion by uneven growth, the contest between what pundits call 'red' America and 'blue' America intensified during the presidency of George W. Bush and did not abate under Barack Obama's leadership. There is every reason to think this pattern will continue during Donald Trump's presidency.

Economic trends in the 1990s generally reinforced this 'new sectionalism'. Higher tax rates, labour costs, and energy prices in the North-East made it harder for elected officials from 'blue' states to find common ground on foreign and domestic policy with 'red' state officials who had competing economic concerns. So did the uneven effects of globalization. The outsourcing of American jobs hit the ageing industrial centres of the North-East especially hard. Well-paying, unionized jobs in manufacturing were the first to be lost as production lines were moved abroad and cheap imports arrived from low-wage economies. The North-East moved to the forefront of efforts to rein in America's commitment to free trade. Free trade's most reliable advocates came from the South and, especially, the Mountain West: ironically, the one part of the country that had consistently opposed Roosevelt's efforts to liberalize trade in the 1930s.

The South and the West also provided the surest support for foreign policies that put a premium on military power. Some analysts attribute these regional differences to strategic subcultures: southerners are said to be more nationalistic and less willing to accept the constraints on national autonomy that accompany institutionalized multilateralism. Whatever the merits of such claims, changes in the economic and political geography of military spending and production made it harder for politicians from different parts of the country to find common ground on national security policy. Since the 1970s, Pentagon spending on military procurement and on research and development benefited the South and West at the expense of the North-East, contributing to the decline of the manufacturing sector in the North. In addition, the southern and western states that make up the so-called 'gunbelt' have consistently received a larger share of the resources spent on military bases and personnel.

Seen in this light, the fights between Republicans and Democrats about how America should respond to 'rogue states' like Saddam Hussein's Iraq, or China's rise to great powerdom, or the outsourcing of American jobs to India take on new meaning. They are battles in a larger political war for control of the national political economy. This is why Republicans took exception to Bill Clinton's efforts to slow the growth of defence spending and why Democrats opposed the unilateral turn that foreign policy took during George W. Bush's presidency. Foreign policies that put a premium on military power and free trade resonate in the southern and western areas that Republicans represent. Conversely, foreign policies that shift some of the burden of 'leadership' to other nations and international institutions help Democrats politically in the North-East and on the Pacific Coast.

To be sure, this gap between Republicans and Democrats is not solely explained by uneven growth or electoral geography. American primacy has also had an effect. For all of its pathologies and shortcomings, the Cold War had a disciplining effect on America's politics. Public anxieties about Moscow's geopolitical ambitions and 'the bomb' also made consensus-building easier by forcing politicians to the centre. With the collapse of the Soviet empire Republicans and Democrats have found it easier (i.e. politically safer) to use foreign policy to pursue narrower political ends. This is especially true of those elected officials who hail from the 'red' and 'blue' districts and states whose voters are overwhelmingly Republican and Democratic.

The widening gyre

For all it changed, 9/11 did not reverse this trend. The initial surge in bipartisan unity in Washington and beyond that followed the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon quickly subsided.[4] And as the partisan debate over the war in Iraq demonstrates, Republicans and Democrats today are in strong disagreement about the proper mix of power and diplomacy in foreign affairs. Meanwhile, the war on terrorism has done little to quell partisan strategizing and electioneering on Capitol Hill over trade policy, foreign aid, and even homeland security. According to one widely used index, Congress is today more politically fractious and polarized than at any time in the last one hundred years.[5]

George W. Bush's combative governing style clearly contributed to this state of affairs, but the sources of today's foreign policy divide run deeper. Indeed, while many foreign policy analysts predicted that Barack Obama's election would restore bipartisanship to foreign policy, the anticipated 'post-partisan' era in foreign policy has not materialized. Try as he might to reach across the aisle, Obama's calls for renewed bipartisanship went unanswered (Kupchan and Trubowitz 2011). Congress remained deeply divided over foreign policy during Obama's presidency. Meanwhile, public opinion polls revealed striking gaps between Republican and Democratic voters on issues ranging from the war on terrorism, to Pentagon spending, to free trade.

KEY POINTS

- Today, Republicans and Democrats are more divided over foreign policy matters than at any time since the Second World War. Partisan differences are again running along regional lines, with the so-called 'red' states of the South and Mountain West on one side and the 'blue' states of the North-East and Pacific Coast on the other side.
- Politicians from 'red' America champion foreign policies that put a premium on American power. Those who hail from 'blue' America favour greater reliance on international institutions and multilateral diplomacy.
- These divisions hardened during George W. Bush's presidency and did not ease on Barack Obama's watch. But the process of regional restructuring that gave rise to them began before 2001. It is likely to continue during Donald Trump's presidency.

Conclusion

Most accounts of American foreign policy making focus on national ideologies and institutions. This reflects the widely held belief among foreign policy analysts that politics in the United States has become increasingly 'nationalized' and divorced from place-specific interests. The regional nature of struggles in America's early years that shaped the political debates over 'non-entanglement' in European affairs and continental expansion is assumed to have withered away in the twentieth century, with the closing of the 'national frontier', the rise of American power, and the nation's steady integration into the world economy. Sectionalism is viewed as a relic of America's past, a primitive impulse that has been displaced by the march of time.

This view of American development confuses a process with an outcome. Despite decades of economic convergence, the American economy is marked by high degrees of regional specialization and differentiation. Moreover, the nation's spatially decentralized system of political representation offers ample opportunity for regional differences to find political expression at the national level, and sometimes as party conflicts, as in the 1890s and again today. Once again, Republicans and Democrats are advancing fundamentally different visions of American power that are shaped in significant ways by the regional interests these parties represent. Republicans who hail from 'red' America contend that American power depends primarily on the possession and use of military might. By contrast, Democrats who represent 'blue' America maintain that the nation's power depends more on persuasion than coercion, and on domestic investments in infrastructure and education.

Which vision will dominate American foreign policy in the years ahead? Making predictions is always hazardous, but short of a major political realignment that gives the Democrats or Republicans effective control over the national political economy, the most likely outcome is continued conflict and polarization. America's two parties are so deeply entrenched regionally, and so evenly divided nationally, that bipartisan coalition-building is likely to continue to be ad hoc, fragile, and short-lived (Trubowitz and Mellow 2011). America may enjoy unrivalled power internationally, but today it lacks the domestic political will needed to convert that power into programmatic policy.

QUESTIONS

1. Why is the foreign policy making process in the United States so conflict-ridden?
2. Why are some regions of the United States more prone to expansionist foreign policies than others?
3. When are sectional differences over foreign policy most likely to find expression as partisan conflicts? Use historical examples to support your answer.
4. Why did the industrial North-East favour a policy of imperial expansion in the 1890s? Why did the agrarian South oppose expansionism?
5. Why did the North-East and the South find common cause in internationalism in the 1930s?
6. Why were politicians from western states more prone to nationalism and isolationism before the Second World War?

7. Why is the foreign policy making process in the United States so much more partisan today than it was at the height of the Cold War?
8. How have the North-East's views of free trade changed over time? What explains the shifts in the region's attitudes toward trade?
9. In the 1890s, southern leaders opposed a large peacetime military establishment. Today, southerners are the Pentagon's biggest backers in Congress. What factors contributed to this change in the South's attitude toward military power?
10. Why did Barack Obama's calls for bipartisanship go unfulfilled?

FURTHER READING

Brzezinski, Z. (2007), *Second Chance: Three Presidents and the Crisis of American Superpower* (New York: Basic Books).

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A stimulating account of America's rise as a great power and its international consequences.

Reynolds, D. (2001), *From Munich to Pearl Harbor: Roosevelt's America and the Origins of the Second World War* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee).

An insightful study of America's turn toward liberal internationalism.

Trubowitz, P. (2011), *Politics and Strategy: Partisan Ambition and American Statecraft* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).

A systematic analysis of how presidents make foreign policy.

ENDNOTES

1. See, for example, Agnew (1987), Bensel (1984), and Markusen (1987).
2. See Trubowitz (1998), Silverstone (2004), and Narizny (2007).
3. In the discussion below, I utilize the classic tripolar grouping that divides America's states into three 'great regions', divided roughly along the courses of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers: the North-East, South, and West. The North-East refers to states in New England, the Middle Atlantic, and the Great Lakes areas: Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin. The South includes states from the South-East and South-West: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia. The West refers to states from the Great Plains, Mountain West, and Far West: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Oregon, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.
4. See Trubowitz and Mellow (2005).
5. http://voteview.com/.

You can find a range of online resources to support your learning at www.oup.com/uk/cox_stokes3e/.

11

Media and US foreign policy

Piers Robinson

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Introduction

The events of 9/11 transformed the foreign policy agenda of the United States and ushered in a global 'war on terror'. The events of that day were communicated by the world's media almost instantaneously and had a profound impact upon both US and global public opinion. Within weeks, and with overwhelming support from both US media and the US public, the Bush administration invaded Afghanistan. Then, in a short period of time, the US government mobilized the support of both the media and the public to back the invasion of Iraq. Since then, US strategies in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and now Syria have caused controversy both internationally and within the United States. The increase in casualties across these war zones, scandal over the treatment of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib and US involvement in torture, controversy over drone strikes, and widespread unease at state surveillance following the Snowden leaks, have all generated significant levels of media criticism and public dissent in the USA. In addition, the emergence of a vibrant alternative media through the internet, coupled with the ubiquity of social media, have encouraged an increasingly diverse, and also fractious, public sphere. In short, US foreign policy since 9/11, under both the Bush and Obama administrations, has been conducted under the glare of media and public attention both within the United States and globally. But what roles have public opinion and media

played during these events? To what extent have the US media and public been manipulated by the US government, and to what extent, conversely, have public opinion and media shaped US foreign policy during these tumultuous times? Moreover, what are the consequences of public opinion and media for US power in the twenty-first century? Such questions are the subject matter of this chapter.

This chapter introduces students to the range of debates that have dominated research into the relationship between US public opinion, media, and foreign policy. Before grappling with these academic debates, we will discuss the nature of US media and public opinion, including a consideration of democratic expectations of mass media and public opinion. This initial section sets the grounds for a discussion of pluralist and elite approaches to understanding the public opinion/media/foreign policy nexus. Pluralist approaches emphasize both the independence and power of US media and public opinion and their ability to influence US foreign policy. Elite approaches, discussed next, adopt a different understanding of this nexus and highlight the ability of US political elites to shape both media and public perceptions. The chapter then moves to a discussion of the role of propaganda and persuasion with respect to US power projection. Throughout, attention is paid to the ways in which public opinion and media can be understood as a source of power for, and as a constraint upon, US foreign policy. In a final section, the chapter discusses contemporary debates concerning the impact of technological developments, including the rise of global media such as Al Jazeera as well as the internet and social media, upon US power and influence. First, however, we need to introduce basic concepts regarding media and public opinion.

Concepts

When discussing *media*, academics are, more often than not, referring to mainstream media outlets such as TV news channels, newspapers, and cable networks such as CNN and Fox News. While other components of US media, such as the film and light entertainment industry, are important with regard to political information (Baum 2003), it is these traditional mainstream news media sources that are understood to be the crucial sites upon which political information is mediated and communicated to the public. For the sake of brevity, in this chapter the term 'media' is used to mean news media. Key US network television media outlets include CBS, NBC, and ABC, and significant cable channels are CNN and Fox News. US newspaper coverage of international affairs is largely led by the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. As with other US newspapers, these are regionally based, albeit with a minority nationally based readership, but they do have a significant influence upon the remainder of the US press. In addition to mainstream news media, the internet has facilitated the emergence of alternative media and social media. Online news providers such as *Democracy Now* are increasingly providing an alternative to established mainstream media, while people frequently share news via social media platforms. Although much of the information disseminated via social media routes is actually traceable to existing mainstream news media, it certainly is the case these new media forms have had a significant impact on the range of information available to the US public.

In terms of journalistic norms, traditional mainstream US media claim to be objective in their approach to covering the news. Even in relation to international affairs coverage, traditional mainstream media disavow suggestions of their news coverage being distorted by patriotism and national bias. At the same time, the last twenty years has seen the rise in partisan media (e.g. Fox News and MSNBC) which are more open to admitting a particular political agenda and, in the case of Fox News, are overtly patriotic (Prior 2013). Whether partisan or not, news media in the USA are supposed to provide US citizens with accurate and truthful news about international events and, in doing so, to function as the central component of the US public sphere within which informed, open, and free-ranging debate can occur. Media are also expected to perform a watchdog role whereby both government and powerful interests are held to account by media. Examples such as the Watergate scandal in the 1970s, when journalists Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein uncovered political corruption by the Nixon administration, are often cited as seminal examples of watchdog journalism. More recently, veteran investigative reporter Seymour Hersh's watchdog journalism highlighted issues surrounding the treatment of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib in Iraq, questioned Syrian government responsibility for the 2012 Ghouta chemical weapon attack in Damascus, and critically evaluated official US claims regarding the killing of Osama bin Laden and official Saudi connections with

Islamic fundamentalist terrorism (Hersh 2004, 2014, 2015). The independence of the media from political power is in theory guaranteed through US media operating according to the free market model: that is to say, media outlets are privately owned and run as a business in order to make profit. As a consequence, US media are not controlled by government and are, in theory, protected from undue influence and pressure. Public service broadcasting, whereby media is funded through public money and regulated by the state, does exist in the USA (e.g. PBS, the Public Broadcasting Service) but has a small viewership and minimal influence. As such, the dominance of commercial media in the USA is exceptional, as most Western democracies have developed mixed media systems that contain a greater proportion of public service broadcasting. Overall, the key point here is that the assumption underlying the free market model is that power is sufficiently devolved so as to enable a free and independent media. As such, US media are expected to conform to the pluralist model whereby all groups in US society, from government through to business to the public, have access to, and are represented in, the US public sphere.

KEY POINTS

- Political communication research focuses upon the analysis of mainstream media outlets such as television news and newspapers.
- Today the US media environment includes supposedly objective media outlets (e.g. ABC, NBC, CBS) as well as partisan media (e.g. Fox News and MSNBC) and alternative media (e.g. Democracy Now).
- As a whole, US mainstream media are expected to provide US citizens with a full range of relevant viewpoints and opinions.

Pluralist approaches

Pluralist approaches make a number of important claims. The first is that power is sufficiently dispersed throughout society (including across government, media, and the public) so that no one set of interests is able to prevail. Rather, the political process, including media debate and public opinion formation, is the outcome of a range of competing positions negotiated through an open political system and a free media, and underpinned by a public that has access to sufficient information in order to develop an independent opinion. More specifically, pluralist approaches assume, first, that the US public are capable of rationally processing news information in order to form their own, independent, opinions. Second, pluralist approaches maintain that mainstream media are sufficiently independent from political power to allow them to present a diverse range of political perspectives. Third, pluralist approaches claim that the US political system is sensitive to, and therefore influenced by, public opinion and media.

Having clarified what is meant by *pluralism*, we now turn to consider pluralist accounts of the public opinion/media/foreign policy nexus. I will first examine pluralist accounts of the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy, and then pluralist accounts about the relationship between media and foreign policy.

Public opinion and foreign policy

For some academics and many politicians, public opinion is a force to be reckoned with. Indeed, according to liberal demoratic ideals, public opinion can and should exert an influence on foreign policy formulation. Perhaps the clearest articulation of this claim can be found in the notion of the 'Vietnam Syndrome'. During the United States war in Southeast Asia, aimed at preventing the defeat of the South Vietnamese government by communist forces, the US government suffered a significant, albeit gradual, decline in public support for the war. With the eventual defeat of US forces, a perception emerged within some quarters of the US foreign policy establishment that negative public reaction to US casualties was fundamental in draining the commitment of the US government to fight in Vietnam. Belief in the Vietnam Syndrome is so prevalent within military and political circles that it is regularly invoked during debates over US military operations, for example in Somalia in 1992–3, in Kosovo in 1999, and in recent US operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Unless military victory can be achieved with minimal loss of life, erosion of public support will ultimately contribute to military defeat. According to the Vietnam Syndrome principle, public opinion acts as a *constraint upon US power*.

Whether or not the Vietnam Syndrome exists as a reality, as opposed to a belief, is subject to substantial debate. In fact, evidence exists supporting an inverse

relationship between US casualties and public support for war. For example, in his book *War, Presidents and Public Opinion*, John Mueller (1973) examined opinion polls and casualty counts during the Korean and Vietnam wars, and found that public support declined *inexorably* as the death toll of American soldiers increased. However, while casualties might decrease public support for war, the extent to which this then influences politics is less clear-cut. For example, there exists some evidence that foreign policy issues do have a major impact upon how the US public votes (e.g. Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida 1989). However, even if foreign policy issues influence voting and, in turn, impact on a US president in electoral terms, this does not necessarily mean that actual policy is then influenced. For example, the Republican Party suffered significant losses in the 2006 congressional elections, which many analysts put down to the Iraq War. However, the resulting impact of those losses on the Bush administration did not necessarily influence its decisions regarding policy in Iraq. Indeed, research documenting the impact of public opinion on actual foreign policy decisions is relatively scarce (see Holsti, 1992, for an overview). Part of the problem lies in gathering evidence from meetings that are held in secret. And, even when documentary evidence exists from such meetings, the researcher is still confronted with the task of inferring from this data what was actually going on in the minds of policy makers. A more complicated issue confounding attempts to *measure influence* is the difficulty of disentangling one factor influencing policy making, public opinion, from the multitude of factors that may be relevant.

Overall, however, a perception persists that US public opinion does influence US foreign policy. The actual empirical evidence to support this perception is less certain. While evidence points toward the importance of foreign affairs vis-à-vis voting, there is less to support the claim that foreign policy decisions are then influenced as a result. At most, public opinion is one factor among many shaping policy decisions. Perhaps of greater importance, however, is the tendency of the public opinion–foreign policy literature to ignore a crucial intervening variable—that of media. In the broadest sense, the details of particular foreign policy issues have to be communicated via mainstream media. In turn, the question of how public opinion is shaped regarding specific issues is linked to the way in which US media present those issues. In terms of understanding influences upon US foreign policy, it is equally important to examine the way media reports on international affairs. And it is to pluralist accounts of the relationship between media and foreign policy that we now turn.

Media and foreign policy: from oppositional media during the the Vietnam War to the CNN effect of the 1990s

It was the Vietnam War, again, that elevated interest in the power of media to mould both public opinion and foreign policy. While arguments surrounding the Vietnam Syndrome focused upon the impact of US casualties on public opinion, a parallel argument emerged concerning the role of US media, in particular during the 1968 Tet Offensive. This offensive involved an uprising throughout South Vietnam organized by communist forces. During this event, fighting erupted across major cities in South Vietnam and in full view of US journalists. The war, which had been presented by the US military as one that was being won, suddenly appeared out of control. For some, relentlessly adversarial and critical journalism revealed the horrors of the Vietnam War, both fuelling anti-war sentiment and forcing the hand of policy makers. As with public opinion and the Vietnam Syndrome discussed earlier, the perception was created that media had acted as a powerful constraint, effectively limiting the use of US military power (see Key quotes 11.1). Since that time, the number of studies asserting the influence of media on foreign policy has steadily increased. Two developments, in particular, underpinned the thesis that the US media was beginning to wield greater power. The first concerned the arrival of twenty-four-hour news broadcasting epitomized by Cable News Network (CNN). As a news channel attempting to compete with traditional media, CNN promised an orientation toward international news and took advantage of developments in communication technology to provide dramatic real-time reporting from around the world. Largely due to CNN, events such as the collapse of communism, symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the 1991 Gulf War were experienced in real time by many US citizens. The effect of this development, according to some commentators (e.g. Hoge 1994), was to increase the exposure of both the US public and foreign policy establishment as major crises around the world were reported instantaneously. Some spoke of foreign policy being driven by CNN,

the so-called 'CNN effect'. The second development understood to have increased media influence was the end of the Cold War. During this period world events had been dominated by the ideological clash between communism and capitalism that had created an ideological bond between US journalists and policy makers. In short, US journalists and US policy makers viewed global events through the same Cold War prism of anti-communism and journalists were disinclined to question their government when under threat from the 'red menace'. Released from the ideological prism of the Cold War, US journalists had, it was argued, become freer to cover the stories they wanted to and criticize their government. Overall, these developments in media (twenty-four-hour, real-time news) and global politics (the ending of the Cold War) have been understood by some as ushering in an era of unequalled media power (e.g. Entman 2004).

KEY QUOTES 11.1: RICHARD NIXON ON MEDIA AND THE VIETNAM WAR

The Vietnam War was complicated by factors that never before occurred in America's conduct of a war ... More than ever before, television showed the terrible human suffering and sacrifice of war. Whatever the intention behind such relentless and literal reporting of the war, the result was a serious demoralization of the home front, raising the question whether America would ever again be able to fight an enemy abroad with unity and strength of purpose at home.

(Nixon 1978)

Further impetus was given to the claim of the CNN effect by an increase in interventions during humanitarian crises (see Key quotes 11.2). Following the 1991 Gulf War, when the USA led a UN-authorized war to reverse the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, uprisings occurred in northern and southern Iraq aimed at the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime. When these were suppressed by Saddam Hussein a major humanitarian crisis developed, and Iraqi Kurds became trapped in the mountainous region of northern Iraq attempting to escape Saddam's forces. Following weeks of critical media coverage, the USA intervened by creating safe areas in northern Iraq. For many this represented an unprecedented instance where the USA had been moved by media and public pressure to intervene in the internal affairs of another state in order to protect human rights. Further US involvement during crises in Somalia in 1991–2 (see Box 11.1), Bosnia in 1995, and Kosovo in 1999, all of which received extensive attention from the US media, seemed to confirm the power of media to drive foreign policy formulation (Robinson 2002). Overall, the idea of the CNN effect dovetails with liberal democrat arguments (see Major debates and their impact 11.1) that favour a democratic and open foreign policy agenda shaped by media and public opinion. But how real is the CNN effect?

KEY QUOTES 11.2: MICHAEL MANDELBAUM ON HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION

For the United States, however, what lies behind intervention in the post-Cold War era is neither gold, nor glory, nor strategic calculation. It is, rather, sympathy. The televised pictures of starving people in northern Iraq, Somalia, and Bosnia created a political clamor to feed them, which propelled the US military into those three distant parts of the world.

(Mandelbaum 1994)

BOX 11.1: US INTERVENTION IN SOMALIA, 1992–3

The US intervention (Operation Restore Hope) during the crisis in Somalia was a seminal event in terms of both intervention during a humanitarian crisis and the role of media in US foreign policy formulation. The crisis in Somalia had developed due to civil war, the collapse of central government, and ensuing mass starvation. By 1992, the crisis was attracting a significant degree of international attention and the USA started to become increasingly involved. By December 1992, 28,000 US troops were deployed in Somalia in order to support the provision of aid. As well as apparently cementing a new norm of humanitarian intervention, the intervention was a major news event remembered perhaps most for the graphic images of starvation and conflict in Somalia and the images of US marines being greeted on the beeches of Mogadishu, not by hostile gunmen, but by the world's press. By the end of the operation, with the worldwide broadcast of a dead US marine being

dragged through the streets of Mogadishu, the intervention was indelibly etched on US memory. As a case study in media, public opinion, and US foreign policy, the intervention highlights the various roles that media and public opinion might play. In terms of the initial intervention, many have argued that the decision to intervene was caused by the CNN effect whereby graphic and emotive images of starving people created a cry to 'do something' from the American public, thereby compelling US policy makers to take action (e.g. Kennan 1993). Others have claimed that the attention of US media to the suffering in Somalia helped to build a domestic constituency for the intervention which policy makers were then able to draw upon to support the intervention (Robinson 2002: 59–62). As such, the media and public opinion had an enabling effect with respect to the decision to intervene. Once the intervention was under way, US media coverage helped to mobilize support among the US public for the operation by portraying US actions in a positive light, emphasizing the role US soldiers and aid workers were playing in saving Somali lives (Robinson 2002: 59–62). By mid- to late 1993, however, the operation had evolved beyond supporting aid delivery to include military action against specific factions within Somalia. The now infamous 'Black Hawk Down' incident, which involved the deaths of 18 US soldiers and up to 1000 Somalis, was a pivotal moment vis-à-vis the perceived failure of the intervention and US withdrawal from the country. In particular, images of a dead US combatant being dragged through the streets of the Somali capital Mogadishu were broadcast on US media and generated, according to some (e.g. Kennan 1993), a political imperative to withdraw from the country. At this stage of the intervention, media may have come to have an impedimental effect on policy makers whereby images of dead US soldiers turned public opinion against involvement in Somalia. Beyond the specifics of the intervention and withdrawal, and any role public opinion and media played in these, the Somalia intervention and its ignominious end have become embedded in US foreign policy thinking as an example of US military failure in the context of humanitarian intervention.

MAJOR DEBATES AND THEIR IMPACT 11.1: LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC AND REALIST VIEWS ON PUBLIC OPINION AND FOREIGN POLICY

The liberal democratic perspective

The idea that public opinion should influence foreign policy formulation has a long history. In the early twentieth century, President Woodrow Wilson articulated the importance of public scrutiny of foreign affairs in his famous 'Fourteen Points'. Here he called for 'Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view'. More specifically, a key component of liberal theory is the *democratic peace thesis*. This thesis maintains that liberal democracies are war-averse because, at least in part, the consent of the public is required. As people generally prefer peace to war, public opinion can act as a powerful constraint upon elected leaders and, therefore, upon the external behaviour of a state. In order for this to occur, public opinion should be able to influence foreign policy. Overall, the liberal democratic perspective maintains that public opinion can contribute to sound foreign policy. As well as acting as a check against corrupt political elites, incorporating public concerns increases the range of opinions and arguments available to policy makers. As a result, more rational and well-thought-out policies can be devised.

The realist perspective

The realist perspective that foreign policy should be immune from public influence also has a long history. Writing in reference to US public opinion during the early part of the Cold War era, Walter Lippman claimed that '[t]he unhappy truth is that the prevailing public opinion has been destructively wrong at the critical junctures' (Lippman 1955: 20) (see also Key quotes 11.3). In part, the claim underpinning the realist perspective is that foreign policy elites are best placed to decide what should be done in order to further US national interests and, at the same time, that the US public are largely ignorant and/or ill-informed about international affairs and, therefore, ill-equipped to think about the complexities of foreign policy. But the realist claim is also now underpinned by the neo-realist position that policy makers react to events in the international system, such as emerging threats and shifts in the balance of power, and not to internal factors such as the desires and wishes of the US public. Overall, realism argues that policy makers should remain detached from the pressures of public opinion, formulating foreign policy in response to external events in the international system, and not in response to internal domestic politics, including public opinion.

In fact, rather than confirming the impression of an all-powerful media, a large body of research into the CNN effect has suggested the existence of a far more subtle range of effects, most of which indicate that claims of a media-*driven* foreign policy are exaggerated and that media effects are narrower and more conditional than is often claimed to be the case (Gowing 1994; Robinson 2002). For example, Gowing

(1994) argues that media influence is limited to largely cosmetic and tactical policies such as the airlifting of a few injured children out of Sarajevo during the 1992–5 war in Bosnia or the use of limited airstrikes during that same war. Also, Robinson (2002) and Livingston (1997) argue, respectively, that media influence is limited to situations of elite uncertainty and relatively low-cost and uncontroversial policies (such as helping aid agencies deliver food and medical supplies). Rarely has research demonstrated significant media impact on major foreign policy matters although, as described in Box 11.1, which describes the case of US intervention in Somalia, many still believe that media play a significant role in foreign policy formulation.

Procedural criticism versus substantive criticism

In concluding our discussion of pluralist accounts, it is important to note that while claims about the influence of public opinion and media abound, academic research suggests that actual influence wielded is more subtle and nuanced than is commonly assumed. As discussed, assertions about the influence of public opinion upon foreign policy, while receiving empirical support, need to be moderated by the acknowledgement of the multitude of factors influencing policy making. At the same time, notions of a CNN effect need to be moderated through acknowledgement that its scope is more conditional and modest than is often claimed to be the case.

More significantly, much research on media influence suggests that it occurs most often at the procedural level, rather than at a substantive level (Althaus 2003). The term *procedural* describes criticism and influence that relates to debate over the implementation of foreign policy. The term *substantive* is used to describe criticism and influence that relates to the underlying justification and rationale for particular foreign policies. For example, the Vietnam War was criticized by US media and public more often at a procedural level whereby the central question revolved around whether the USA was winning or losing the war. Criticism, however, rarely raised the more substantive question of the justification for US involvement in Vietnam. As we shall see in the next section, when we discuss elite/critical accounts of the public opinion/media/foreign policy nexus, the primary focus of concern is precisely this lack of substantive debate over US foreign policy.

Criticisms of pluralist approaches

The claim that the relationship between US public opinion, media, and foreign policy can be described as pluralist is often subject to four major criticisms. (For a clearly stated challenge to pluralist approaches see Herman and Chomsky 1988 and Key quotes 11.5). The first relates to the tendency of pluralists to overestimate agency, that is the ability of individuals to influence and change politics, while underplaying the importance of political and economic structures that serve to constrain and direct individuals. For example, while US journalists are 'independent' and guaranteed the right to free speech, both the political system within which they operate and the commercial company their media are a part of are likely to exert an influence upon what the journalist thinks and writes. Second, pluralist approaches can be criticized for overplaying both the knowledge levels of the US public vis-à-vis foreign affairs and the actual responsiveness of the US government to public and media influence. Here, a tendency to measure the more plentiful procedural-level criticism and influence, as opposed to the rarer substantive-level criticism, leads to overestimation of the pluralist credentials of the US system. A third and related problem is a tendency for advocates of pluralist approaches to focus on relatively rare events, such as the Watergate scandal, as evidence of public and media power when, in fact, these are arguably exceptions to the rule. Finally, pluralist approaches tend to ignore the financial and material resources that are employed by the US government in order to influence media and public opinion. Here, a substantial public relations apparatus, historically referred to as *propaganda*, serves to promote official viewpoints via press briefings, information packs, off-the-record briefings, and the careful packaging (or 'spin-doctoring') of policy. Thus the flow of information between government and public is not a two-way street, as claimed by pluralist approaches, but weighted in favour of the US government and powerful actors.

KEY POINTS

- The liberal democratic perspective maintains that public opinion and media should influence foreign policy.
- Pluralist approaches argue the public are capable of both rationally assessing foreign policy and influencing foreign policy.

- Pluralist approaches argue that media have a significant impact upon foreign policy formulation.
- Media criticism of, and influence upon, foreign policy can be categorized as procedural (relating to the implementation of foreign policy initiatives) or substantive (relating to the justification for foreign policy initiatives).

Elite approaches

Compared to pluralist approaches, elite accounts of the public opinion/media/foreign policy nexus make very different claims. While pluralist approaches assume that power is dispersed throughout the political system and society, elite approaches argue that relatively small groups within the USA wield power. With respect to US foreign policy, groups with power include foreign policy officials, think tanks, and representatives of large business interests. Those who are not included, according to the elite model, are the bulk of the American public. Consequently, the political process, including media debate and public opinion formation, is the outcome of elite interests and agendas that dominate media and public debate. Specifically, elite approaches maintain that the US public are not only influenced by what they see and hear in the news, but are also directed to think about issues in a way that is congenial to elite interests. Following on from this, elite approaches maintain that media are located closely to elite groups in both political and financial terms. Consequently media are a propaganda tool for elites. Finally, elite approaches maintain that the US political system is largely immune from non-elite influence.

Having introduced elite approaches, and following the section on pluralist approaches, I will first examine elite accounts of the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy, and then discuss elite accounts of the relationship between media and foreign policy.

Public opinion and foreign policy

In fact, for many foreign policy *realists* (see Controversies 11.1), early research suggested that the US public was volatile and untrustworthy. Gabriel Almond's (1950) *The American People and Foreign Policy* argued that only a small proportion of the US public, which he labelled as an 'attentive public', possessed knowledge sufficient to hold a valid position on foreign policy issues. The broader mass public held non-attitudes whereby individuals responded irrationally to foreign affairs issues and held unstable, rapidly changing opinions. Associated with Almond's position was a significant stream of research maintaining public opinion had little impact on foreign policy. Together, the idea that public opinion was both irrational and possessing of little influence became known as the 'Almond–Lippman Consensus' (see Key quotes 11.3). For example, Bernard Cohen's (1973) *The Public's Impact on Foreign Policy* asserted that foreign policy officials discounted public opinion and maintained that public opinion should rather be shaped by government. While pluralist challenges have emerged (as discussed in the previous section), plenty of examples abound to support the Almond–Lippman Consensus. For example, in relation to knowledge levels among the US public about the 2003 Iraq War, some opinion polls showed that a significant number of the US public believed the Iraqi president Saddam Hussein was involved with Osama bin Laden in conspiring to attack the USA.[1] An example of policy elites regarding the US public as something to be led is that of President Bush's speech writer Michael Gerson, who asserted that the 9/11 attacks provided the Bush administration with a 'plastic, teachable moment' (Woodward 2004: 84) whereby the US public could be persuaded to support Bush's 'war on terror' and other foreign policy initiatives.

KEY QUOTES 11.3: WALTER LIPPMAN ON PUBLIC OPINION

The people have impressed a critical veto upon the judgements of informed and responsible officials. They have compelled the government, which usually knew what would have been wiser, or was necessary, or what was more expedient, to be too late with too little, or too long with too much, too pacifist in peace and too bellicose in war, too neutralist or appeasing in negotiations or too intransigent … It has shown itself to be a master of indecision when the stakes are life and death.

(Lippman 1955)

Challenging the notion that the US public are naturally irrational or ill-informed, other scholars have pointed towards the ways in which public knowledge and understanding are profoundly shaped by mainstream media. Here, the concepts of *agenda setting*

(McCombs and Shaw 1972), *priming* (Iyengar and Kinder 1987), and *framing* (Entman 1991) clarify the ways in which public opinion can be shaped. In his seminal study *The Press and Foreign Policy*, Bernard Cohen (1973) argued: '[t]he press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about'; that is to say, media are able to set the agenda by getting the public to think about certain issues and not others. 'Priming' refers to the ability of media to direct publics to the issues upon which they should judge their leaders, while 'framing' refers to the ways in which the presentation of news information helps to shape how people think about specific issues. For example, analysing the 1991 Gulf War, Iyengar and Simon (1994) demonstrate that media focus on the Gulf crisis led to the public defining the crisis as the most important political issue at the time. Media had set the agenda and directed the public as to what was the most important issue to think about. Their analysis also demonstrated that the US public were, accordingly, primed to judge US president George Bush Sr. on how well he handled the war. Finally, Iyengar and Simon argue that media coverage of the war was framed in terms of event-driven news (*episodic news*) that focused upon military matters, such as military technology and the progress of the war, and tended to downplay *thematic news* dealing with diplomatic issues and issues related to the rationale and justification for war. According to their analysis, this framing of news increased viewers' support for military action, as opposed to alternative diplomatic solutions.

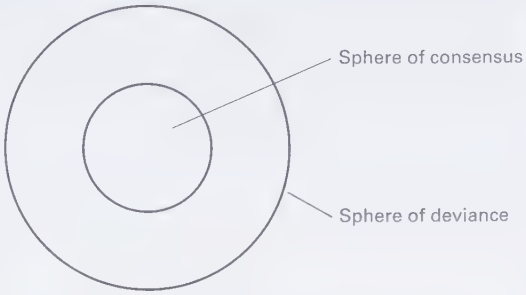
Thus far, it is clear that elite approaches perceive the US public as either ill-informed, a 'bewildered herd' as the famous political commentator Walter Lippman (1922) once asserted, or as highly dependent upon media in terms of their opinion formation. But what role do the US media play in creating this state of affairs? With this in mind, it is to elite accounts of media we now turn.

Media and foreign policy

At the core of elite accounts of mainstream US media lies the claim that the media agenda, and the framing of issues, usually reflect the agenda and perspective of US political elites. A significant and powerful early critique of US media was developed by Daniel Hallin (1986) in his analysis of US media coverage of the Vietnam War, *The Uncensored War*. Directly challenging claims (noted earlier) that US media adopted an adversarial stance toward the war, Hallin's analysis found that coverage was actually very supportive of the war right up until 1968. At this point, however, communist forces launched the Tet Offensive, and fighting that had hitherto been confined to rural parts of the country spilled over onto the streets of major cities, including the capital Saigon. While this event produced some of the most graphic and infamous images of the war, and did precipitate an increase in media criticism, Hallin finds that this only occurred after the US political establishment had become divided over whether or not the war in Vietnam could be won at a cost that was bearable for the United States. Importantly, according to Hallin, the media rarely reported in positive terms the views of the US anti-war movement, which maintained that the war was immoral and unjustified. As such, the US media, throughout the war in Vietnam, merely followed the contours of elite opinion as journalists relied upon privileged, Washington-based news sources. Consequently, when the US establishment was in agreement on policy, media operated within a *sphere of consensus* and coverage was supportive of the war (see Figure 11.1). When the US establishment became divided over the war, the US media reflected this debate by reporting within the *sphere of legitimate controversy*. However, the US media rarely reported upon those with views outside the boundary of *legitimate controversy* such as the anti-war movement, which, according to Hallin, lay within a *sphere of deviance*. As such, media criticism of the Vietnam War remained at the level of *procedural criticism*, reflecting debate over whether current policy was winning the war, and did not extend to *substantive criticism* questioning of the legitimacy of US involvement in Vietnam.

Further conceptual clarification of the elite model came with Bennett's influential *indexing hypothesis*. According to Bennett (see Key quotes 11.4), media deference to US elites can be explained through the propensity of journalists to index news coverage to public officials in Washington. In part this is because journalists see it as their democratic responsibility to consult publicly elected officials when reporting the news. But it is also a function of the tremendous quantity of information (press briefings, public statements, etc.) that is produced by US centres of government which helps to feed media demands for a constant flow of news stories. Perhaps most significantly, Bennett notes that the indexing norm helps to keep 'news

Figure 11.1 Spheres of consensus, controversy, and deviance.



Source: By permission of Oxford University Press Inc. Originally published in Daniel C. Hallin (1986), *The Uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press), 117.

compatible with the shifting political and economic interests of the state' (Bennett 1990: 109).

Overall, the net result of the close proximity between US mainstream media and the foreign policy establishment is, according to elite perspectives, that the US public is rarely presented with news information that does anything other than 'manufacture consent' (Lippman 1922; Herman and Chomsky 1988), via processes such as *agenda setting* and *framing*, for policy-making preferences that are decided in Washington. Even when the news *appears* to be critical and adversarial, it is kept within the bounds of elite-legitimized controversy with criticism occurring at the procedural level. As Bennett describes: 'the media have helped create a world that is, culturally speaking, upside down. It is a world in which governments are able to define their own public and where "democracy" becomes whatever the government ends up doing' (Bennett 1990: 125). Of course, for realists, this state of affairs is to be welcomed as it ensures that foreign policy remains debated and decided by those who have the skills to do so. From this perspective, a compliant and therefore supportive public and media become a source of power for US foreign policy, with media helping to mobilize the US public in support of US foreign policy objectives. From a more critical perspective, this state of affairs is to be challenged as an affront to the democratic principles of the United States and its claimed commitment to human rights and justice (see Controversies 11.1 and Key quotes 11.5).

KEY QUOTES 11.4: LANCE BENNETT AND INDEXING

In this ironic twist on the democratic ideal, modern public opinion can be thought of as an 'index' constructed from the distribution of dominant institutional voices as recorded in the mass media. By adopting such an opinion index, the media have helped create a political world that is, culturally speaking, upside down. It is a world in which governments are able to define their own publics and where 'democracy' becomes whatever the government ends up doing.

(Bennett 1990)

CONTROVERSIES 11.1: HERMAN AND CHOMSKY'S (1988) PROPAGANDA MODEL

In Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media, Herman and Chomsky set out their propaganda model, which describes how mainstream US media function as a tool to mobilize public support for elite policy preferences (see Key quotes 11.5). According to this model, five filters function to shape news media output. First, the 'size, ownership and profit orientation of mass media' and their shared 'common interests with other major corporations, banks, and government' create a clash of interest between the media's supposed role as a watchdog of the elite and the interests of that elite (Herman and Chomsky 1988: 3, 14). Consequently, news stories that run contrary to those vested interests are less likely to surface than those consistent with the world view of major corporate conglomerates. Second, media reliance on advertising revenue introduces a further constraining link between the news media and the interests of commerce. This reliance shapes media output in order to appeal to affluent audiences, in whom the advertisers are most interested. It also limits the amount of critical and controversial programming because advertisers generally want 'to avoid programs with serious complexities and disturbing controversies that interfere with the "buying mood"' (Herman and Chomsky 1988: 17). Third, journalists rely heavily on official sources when constructing the news. The need to supply a steady and rapid flow of 'important' news stories combined with the vast public relations apparatus of government and powerful interests more broadly means that journalists tend to become heavily reliant on public officials and corporate representatives when defining and framing the news

agenda. Fourth, whenever controversial material is actually aired it generates a disproportionate degree of 'flak' from individuals connected with powerful interests, including 'corporate community sponsored … institutions' (Herman and Chomsky 1988: 27) such as the Center for Media and Public Affairs, Accuracy in Media (AIM), and government 'spin doctors'. Such criticism serves to caution editors and journalists against putting out news stories that are 'too' controversial. Finally, Herman and Chomsky highlight the importance of an ideology of 'anti-communism as a control mechanism' that provided journalists, at least during the Cold War, with a ready-made template with which to 'understand' global events, and provided the political elite with a powerful rhetorical tool with which to criticize as unpatriotic anyone who questioned US foreign policy (Herman and Chomsky 1988: 29). At the core of the critique developed by Herman and Chomsky (1988) is the claim that mainstream US media perpetuate an image of the United States as inherently benign, peaceful, and committed to high moral standards when, in fact, its foreign policies are riddled with self-interested economic and political objectives that often lead the USA to support violent and illiberal policies. As such, US media are not free and autonomous but, rather, mobilize—through deception—US citizens in support of the actions of their government. For instance, in support of their case, Herman and Chomsky (1988) document how US media functioned to promote anti-communism by highlighting human rights abuses committed by communist states and downplaying similar abuses committed by allies of the United States during the 'struggle against communism'. Overall, Herman and Chomsky present a profound and forcefully argued thesis that raises fundamental questions about the democratic credentials of US society and politics.

For discussions sympathetic to the propaganda model see Herring and Robinson (2003). For critical discussion of the propaganda model see Lang and Lang (2004).

KEY QUOTES 11.5: EDWARD HERMAN AND NOAM CHOMSKY ON MANUFACTURING CONSENT

The mass media serve as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace. It is their function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behaviour that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society. In a world of concentrated wealth and major conflicts of class interest, to fulfil this role requires systematic propaganda.

(Herman and Chomsky 1988)

Criticisms of elite approaches

The empirical claims put forward by advocates of elite approaches are subjected to five main criticisms (see Golding and Murdock 1996, Hallin 1994, Herman 2000, Herring and Robinson 2003, and Lang and Lang 2004, for overviews of criticisms, focused on the *propaganda model* by Herman and Chomsky, regarding elite approaches). The first such criticism is that elite approaches overemphasize the idea that political and economic structures limit the autonomy and agency of both journalists and the US public. Here, the argument is advanced that journalists and citizens actually have a good deal of independence from political and economic power, and are capable of forming opinions that are distinct from the viewpoints of elite groups. Associated with this is a second criticism, based upon audience reception studies, pointing out that individuals have been shown to be capable of resisting dominant messages and frames promoted by political elites. For example, while US elites, and indeed media, promoted the value of the Vietnam War, some claim that significant sections of the US public rejected the legitimacy of the action throughout the war. Indeed, some scholars such as Stuart Hall (1974) have emphasized the ways in which media audiences can negotiate and oppose the meaning in media messages while some postmodernists argue that audiences are almost completely free to reinterpret and reject media messages (Fiske 1989). Third, elite accounts are criticized for exaggerating both the level of agreement and the consistency of shared interests that exists between elite groups in society. Here, the idea is advanced that, in reality, there are divergent interests between, for example, US government and big business, which means that elite groups as a whole are far weaker than implied by the elite model, often 'fighting' among themselves and rarely succeeding in promoting a unified dominant message to media and public. Fourth, the elite model is also sometimes criticized for treating 'the media' as a unified and monolithic entity, effectively acting as a well-honed propaganda wing of the US state when, in fact, there is a good deal of diversity across different US media outlets. Finally, the elite model is sometimes criticized for failing to pay attention to circumstances

where elite influence might be disrupted and spaces opened up for a more critical and independent media. For example, Regina Lawrence (2000) argues that unexpected and newsworthy events that occur beyond the control of government can lead to opportunities for previously marginalized, non-elite groups to influenced media reporting (see Box 11.2 and Key quotes 11.6).

BOX 11.2: BEYOND THE ELITE/PLURALIST DICHOTOMY: NEW APPROACHES TO THEORIZING THE PUBLIC OPINION/MEDIA/FOREIGN POLICY NEXUS

While elite and pluralist perspectives continue to influence academic debate, recent research has attempted to develop models that capture both these theoretical perspectives and, therefore, provide a more nuanced and differentiated understanding of media–state relations. For example, many academics now argue that both elite dissensus (Hallin 1986) (when there exists disagreement within the political and foreign policy establishment) and unexpected events (Lawrence 2000) that occur beyond the control of governments can considerably open up the boundaries of media criticism and influence. So, for example, during the build-up to the invasion of Iraq and the invasion itself in 2003, debate occurred among politicians and within the foreign policy community in the UK over the justification for the war. As a consequence, media coverage was more critical and perhaps influential in terms of shaping public and elite perceptions of the war (see, for example, Robinson et al. 2010). At the same time, unexpected or uncontrolled events (such as the abuse of Iraqis by coalition forces) that spread through the world's media meant that the UK and US governments were subjected to varying levels of criticism and dissent from their respective domestic medias. Other recent accounts that attempt to bridge the elite/pluralist divide include Wolfsfeld's (1997) *political contest model* and Robinson's (2002) *policy–media interaction model*. These models emphasize variables such as levels of policy certainty (Robinson 2002) and control over the political environment (Wolfsfeld 1997). For example, when a government is uncertain over policy, media and public opinion can exert greater influence on policy formulation. Alternatively, when policy is set in place, the potential for media influence wanes. Wolfsfeld argues that sometimes a government can lose control of the political environment, which in turn leads to a more critical media and space for non-elite challenges. He demonstrates how the Israeli government lost control over the political environment during the 1987 Palestinian uprising, the *intifada*; as a consequence, media mobilized support for the Palestinians and criticized Israeli policy (see Key quotes 11.6). And finally, Baum and Groeling present novel theoretical work in their book *War Stories* (2010) in which the elites are understood to dominate the media and public environment during the early stages of a war, but that over time, elite discord and the reality on the ground (casualties and costs of war) endow media and publics with greater autonomy from, and power over, a US government and its war policy. In short, the applicability of the elite and pluralist models varies across time and circumstance.

KEY QUOTES 11.6: GADI WOLFSFELD AND POLITICAL CONTEST

The competition between authorities and challengers over the news media is as fascinating and unpredictable as politics itself. In some ways the central arena resembles the modern sports facility that can be converted into several structures, each designed for a different type of event. Sometimes the arena is used for lavish spectacles in which officials show off their most colourful costumes and weapons. At other times it is a place for fierce contests in which challengers and authorities square off in brutal combat. And at yet other times it becomes a theatre-in-the-round putting on tragic morality plays about the plight of the oppressed and the need for social change.

(*Wolfsfeld 1997*)

KEY POINTS

- The realist perspective argues that media and public opinion should not influence foreign policy.
- Critical accounts argue that the failure of media and public opinion to influence foreign policy is wrong.
- Elite approaches argue that the public are ignorant of international affairs and have little influence.
- The elite model argues that media mobilize support for government policies.

Modern-day propaganda and persuasion: strategic communication and public diplomacy

With respect to the relationship between media, public opinion, and foreign policy, a crucial part of the equation which frequently receives insufficient attention is that of the role of *organized persuasive communication* (OPC) (Robinson 2014). The term OPC refers to the highly organized and strategic approaches to managing information in order to persuade, practised by powerful political actors including the US government and sometimes understood as part of so-called *soft power* (Nye 1990). In fact, a wide variety of terms are employed including strategic communication, public diplomacy, perception management, public relations (PR), psychological operations (psy ops), political marketing, spin and political communication. The most commonly used of these terms are strategic communication and public diplomacy, although historically such approaches to information management have been referred to as propaganda (Miller, Robinson and Bakir 2017). All of these activities involve attempts to influence beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour.

One focus of these activities is on attempts to influence public opinion abroad, so-called public diplomacy. For example, Voice of America first started radio broadcasts in 1942 aimed at promoting democracy and, in time, came to be broadcast in forty-five languages with over 100 million listeners worldwide (Gilboa 1998: 58). Again, in 1953, the United States Information Agency was created in order to 'coordinate the combat against the spread of communist ideas' (Taylor 2006: 5). Overall the aim of public diplomacy has been to attempt to influence the citizens of foreign nations in ways conducive to US interests so that they can in turn influence their respective governments accordingly. As Gilboa (1998: 58–67) describes, public diplomacy (conducted through both media and other fields, including cultural and educational initiatives) has been aimed at long-term influence of target audiences around the world, functioning very much at an ideological level by both promoting US values (such as democracy, human rights, and capitalism) and attempting to persuade peoples of the world that the USA is the leading example of such values. OPC activities are also an integral part of US military operations. These so-called psychological operations include, for example, the integration of 'information operations' with 'counter-insurgency' (COIN) operations, whereby humanitarian aid and positive messaging are combined with military action; such an approach is widely understood as a suitable hybrid approach to 'winning hearts and minds'. Critically, these carrot and stick activities are not seen as separate, but as part of an integrated strategy aimed at organizing conduct via a communications environment that is inextricably enmeshed with the physical context. These activities include violent acts whose function is largely to persuade a broader audience, such as the 'Shock and Awe' strategy employed during the invasion of Iraq.

Although the US public has ostensibly been protected from 'persuasion activities', the passing in 2013 of the the Smith-Mundt Modernization Act means that it is no longer illegal for US-government-funded broadcasting outlets to target US citizens. Of course, one might demur that OPC campaigns, whether called propaganda, public relations, or public affairs, have always played a prominent role with respect to US foreign policy, media, and public opinion and that, quite often, they have been manipulative and indeed deceptive. For example, during the run-up to the 2002 Iraq War, both the British and US governments were involved in the manipulation of intelligence in order to present Iraq as a more threatening and certain WMD (weapons of mass destruction) threat than the intelligence actually suggested (Mearsheimer 2011). Clearly, the extent to which these OPC activities can slip into manipulative and deceptive modes of persuasion raises serious problems with respect to the kind of democratic accountability expected from the liberal democratic perspective; from the realist point of view, though, these persuasion activities can be seen as a necessary part of mobilizing support for necessary foreign policy objectives (see Major debates and their impact 11.1). The current information wars being witnessed with respect to the conflicts in the Ukraine, Syria, Yemen, and Iraq highlight the difficulty of disentangling accurate information from that which is propagandistic, i.e. manipulative or deceptive, and are testament to the ubiquity and significance of organized persuasive communication and contemporary propaganda.

KEY POINTS

- 'Organized persuasive communication' (OPC) refers to the various approaches employed to influence beliefs and behaviour.

- 'Public diplomacy' involves attempts to influence foreign audiences, while 'psy ops' utilize propaganda on the battlefield.
- OPC campaigns also play an important role in mobilizing support for US foreign policy objectives.

The new media environment, the 'war on terror', and US power

Over the last twenty years, debate in this area has increasingly revolved around new developments in communication technology and their potential and actual impact upon existing theoretical frameworks and debates. In this closing section, I set out the key features of this debate, which are, principally, (1) the extent to which developments in communication technology have empowered US public opinion and media, and (2) the impact of these technological developments on global US power and influence, in particular in the context of the current 'war on terror'.

The rise of global media, the internet, and social media

On the one hand, the proliferation of new communication technology, such as portable satellite broadcasting equipment and the emergence of digital cameras contained within mobile phones, appears to create a degree of transparency of events around the world that is unprecedented. Potentially, any event can be captured on 'camera' and that information then passed around the world instantaneously via the internet or global media. In addition, the rise of global media, such as CNN, the Arab-based network Al Jazeera, and RT International (formerly Russia Today), as well as the internet, means that such images (and their stories) can be communicated to US citizens and to the peoples of the world. Many claim that such developments have a radically pluralizing effect by bringing information and news to people more quickly and, in turn, creating greater difficulty for the US government in influencing (or manipulating) news agendas. The recent and ongoing controversy over the Wikileaks website, which has disseminated online large quantities of secret US government documents regarding the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as information regarding the conduct of the 2016 US election, epitomize the apparently limited capacity the US government has to control information flows in the internet era. In addition, the emerging alternative media as well as social media appear to have created a situation of a radically fragmented and indeed polarized US media sphere, one in which the question of truth and accuracy has been submerged within a sea of so-called fake news.

These developments offer, at first glance, evidence to suggest that pluralist approaches have greater validity today. That is to say, developments in communication technology have indeed increased the independence, and therefore power, of the US media and public. Following on from this, elite approaches are less valid and cogent, as the US government has found it harder to direct news agendas and to mould US public opinion. For realists, who advocate elite control of foreign affairs, this is a worrying and perhaps catastrophic development which means that the ability of the USA to protect and promote its interests is being undermined by increased media and public criticism of US foreign policy. From the liberal democratic perspective, these developments could be seen as potentially positive in terms of strengthening the quality and quantity of both public and media input into the foreign policy making process. And yet, even liberal US scholars often appear to believe that perhaps too much power and influence has been handed over to the US media and public (see Key quotes 11.7). Overall, if the thesis that developments in communication technology have indeed transformed the US public sphere is correct, then a question can be raised as to the ability of US foreign policy elites to both communicate important issues to the US public and maintain support for US foreign policy (the realist position). As we shall see next, current evidence suggests that claims of a transformation in the US public sphere are exaggerated, and that it is important to differentiate between domestic US audiences and global audiences.

KEY QUOTES 11.7: JOSEPH NYE ON THE IMPACT OF NEW COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The free flow of broadcast information in open societies has always had an impact on public opinion and the formulation of foreign policy. But now the flow has increased in volume and shortened news cycles … The so-called CNN effect makes it hard to keep items that might otherwise warrant a lower

> priority off the public agenda. Now, with the added interactivity of groups on the internet, it will be harder than ever to maintain a consistent agenda.
> (Nye 1999)

In fact, the argument that US public/media/foreign policy relations have been significantly pluralized is very much open to challenge (Domke 2004; Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston 2006; Livingston and Bennett 2003). Since 9/11, and the emergence of the 'war on terror' as the primary framework within which US foreign policy is formulated, US media and public opinion have been remarkably supportive of the US executive. For example, during the run-up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the US government was successful at persuading most of the US media and public of the relationship between Saddam Hussein's regime and al-Qaeda (even though the majority of expert opinion challenged such a link). Again, in what could be seen as a public relations disaster for the Bush administration, the images of Iraqi prisoners detained by the US military at Abu Ghraib in Iraq were, according to recent research (Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston 2006), in fact reported in a manner conducive to the official White House line. This was done by the US media echoing the White House line that the events represented abuses by a few soldiers rather than the result of a policy of torture. At the same time, rather than having being pluralized, it might be more accurate to describe the US public sphere as having become profoundly divided between citizens still following traditional mainstream media and those who no longer trust them. The growing following of alternative media is testament to the extent to which many Americans distrust mainstream news media. These tensions seem likely only to increase with the election of Donald Trump as president, which has seen an unprecedented and chaotic political firestorm over fake news allegations (levelled at both mainstream and alternative media) and poor government–media relations. Overall, the question of whether traditional patterns of media–public opinion–state relations really have been dramatically transformed, and whether such transformation has reduced the ability of US elites to coordinate US foreign policy in the war on terror, is very much open to debate.

Less contentious, however, is the impact of technological developments in terms of global media and public opinion. Here, the USA has arguably suffered a public relations or propaganda disaster certainly in terms of winning 'hearts and minds' in the 'war on terror'. In part this is due to the problems surrounding the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the diplomatic crises that emerged as the Bush administration attempted, unsuccessfully, to persuade governments and global public opinion of the legitimacy of their actions. The material fact that the aftermath of the toppling of Saddam Hussein has not led to a peaceful, democratic, and flourishing Iraq has increased hostility and resentment toward the USA.[2] At the same time, US propaganda activities are significantly challenged by the rise of new global media such as Al Jazeera and RT International, which effectively limit the degree to which the USA can influence broader global opinions. Put quite simply, non-Western audiences will access news sources that are largely independent of the influence of Western governments. Moreover, the internet further compromises influence over global communication flows and, for example again, the infamous images from Abu Ghraib flow freely through the internet and world media who, unlike the US media, will often use such images without qualification with the White House line.

Conclusions

Overall, transformations in the global information environment of today mean that there is a significant shift in the balance of power, which poses a direct challenge to the ability of the USA to project power internationally. Perhaps of greater importance is the fact that, as I have discussed, at the domestic level media and public debate tend to remain limited to a procedural level, rarely questioning the fundamentals of US foreign policy, and US foreign policy elites have significant capability in terms of leading public and media debate, although the current mainstream-vs-alternative-media divide does pose a challenge to this. And yet opinion outside the US domestic public sphere (i.e. global public opinion within the global public sphere) is often disillusioned, in particular with America's 'war on terror'. Whether or not these two increasingly isolated public spheres can be bridged, especially in a time when US 'strategic communication' and 'public diplomacy' are challenged by the emerging forms of media, and mainstream US media are reluctant to facilitate debate beyond the procedural level, remains to be seen.

QUESTIONS

1. What influence, if any, does the US public have on foreign policy formulation?
2. In what ways, and to what extent, can media influence public opinion?
3. Assess the relative cogency of elite and pluralist models of media–state relations.
4. To what extent do you agree with the realist perspective on media and public opinion?
5. To what extent do you agree with the liberal democratic perspective on media and public opinion?
6. Critical accounts argue that US mainstream media and public opinion are manipulated by elite interests. To what extent do you agree?
7. What impact has new technology had on the public opinion/media/foreign policy nexus in the USA?
8. To what extent are US media and public opinion shaped by government propaganda and organized persuasive communication?

FURTHER READING

Baum, M. A. and Groeling, T. J. (2010), *War Stories: The Causes and Consesquences of Public Views of War* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press).

A sophisticated and up-to-date analysis of the complex relationship between media, public opinion, and US elites during war.

Entman, R. (2004), *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion and US Foreign Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

Comprehensive introduction to the concept of framing, detailing its impact upon both public and foreign policy.

Herman, E. and Chomsky, N. (1988), *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon).

Provocative and widely read example of the elite model, arguing that US media function to mobilize support for elite interests.

Robinson, P. (2002), *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention* (London: Routledge).

Provides a contemporary theoretical and empirical analysis of the 'CNN effect' debate, highlighting the contrasting roles media can play in policy formulation.

Taylor, P.M. (2003), *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Day* (Manchester: Manchester University Press)

An authoritative account of the role of propaganda throughout history and right up to the present day.

Wolfsfeld, G. (1997), *The Media and Political Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

A rich and nuanced analysis of how media can come to act as champions for non-elite groups, and how at other times media serve the interests of governments.

ENDNOTES

1. For opinion poll data on US belief in an al-Qaeda–Hussein link see Milbank and Deane (2003).
2. For extensive information on changing international attitudes toward the USA, see the Pew Global Attitudes Project, http://pewglobal.org/.

You can find a range of online resources to support your learning at www.oup.com/uk/cox_stokes3e/.

SECTION 4

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US foreign policy in the Middle East

Toby Dodge

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Introduction

This chapter assesses the main dynamics that have transformed United States foreign policy towards the Middle East since the First World War (see Figure 12.1 and Table 12.1). First it discusses the applicability of realist, Marxist, and constructivist theories of international relations. It will then assess the role that the Cold War, oil, and Israel have played in shaping American foreign policy. In each of these three areas the United States' tactical approach to the Middle East has produced unintended consequences that have increased resentment towards the USA, destabilized the region, and undermined the USA's long-term strategic goals. The chapter goes on to discuss the Bush Doctrine, launched after 9/11, the resultant invasion of Iraq, and President Barack Obama's attempts to deal with the region during and after the Arab Spring. It concludes by assessing whether the Trump administration's policy toward the region represents continuity with previous presidents or a radical change.

The evolution of the United States' early relationship with the Middle East was shaped by the demise of both the Ottoman and the British empires. The Ottoman Empire collapsed

Figure 12.1 Map of the Middle East and North Africa.

Table 12.1 Important dates and events in relations between the states of the Middle East and the United States of America

1917	April: the United States of America enters the First World War.
	2 November: the Balfour Declaration. British foreign secretary James Balfour, in a letter to Lord Lionel Walter Rothschild, says Britain (with US acquiescence) will support the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.
1918	8 January: US President Wilson issues the fourteen-point statement of its reasons for joining the war and what it expects the peace to look like.
1919	January–June: the Paris Peace Conference draws up the international agreement to run the world after the First World War. It results in the formation of the League of Nations

1947	12 March: US President Truman addresses Congress and launches the Truman Doctrine, asking for permission to aid Greece, Turkey, and then Iran against the Soviet threat.
1948	May: the founding of the state of Israel.
	The first Arab–Israeli War.
1955	24 February: the formation of the Baghdad Pact, an anti-communist regional alliance with Iraq, Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan as members.
	September: Egypt's arms deal with Czechoslovakia.
1956	26 July: Egyptian President Nasser announces the nationalization of the Suez Canal.
	July–November: Suez crisis and the second Arab–Israeli War. Britain, France, and Israel collude to invade Egypt and attempt to remove President Nasser. US President Eisenhower refuses to offer military, diplomatic, or financial support, thus forcing a humiliating withdrawal.
1958	15 July: the first Lebanese civil war erupts; 15,000 US troops are sent to Beirut to stop radicals taking control of the country.
1966	22 February: the British government announces a large-scale reduction of troops in the Middle East, drawing their military out of territory east of Suez Canal in Egypt.
1967	5 June: the third Arab–Israeli War. Israel launches a pre-emptive strike against Egypt, Syria, and Jordan as they prepare for war. The 'Six-Day War' ends with Israel occupying the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip, previously held by Egypt; the Golan Heights, formerly held by Syria; and the West Bank, previously held by Jordan.
1973	6 October: the fourth Arab–Israeli War. Egypt and Syria launch a surprise attack against Israel during the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur.
	In retaliation for United States support of Israel during the war, the Organization of Arab Oil-Producing States impose an oil embargo on exports to the US, to try and force territorial concessions from Israel. It lasts until 1974, by which time oil prices have quadrupled.
1974	16 June: Nixon is the first US President to visit Israel.
1977	19 November: Egyptian President Sadat flies to Israel in an attempt to make peace.
1979	March: Egyptian President Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Begin sign a peace treaty in Washington. Israel agrees to withdraw from Sinai and to commence Palestinian autonomy talks within three years in exchange for a formal peace treaty with Egypt.
	February: the Shah of Iran is overthrown by the Islamic revolution.
	24 December: the Soviet Union invades Afghanistan.
1980	22 September: the Iraqi air force attacks Iran and a land invasion begins at several points along the Iran–Iraq border.
1981	6 October: Egyptian President Sadat gunned down in Cairo by the 'Islamic Group'.
1982	June: Israel invades Lebanon and lays siege to its capital Beirut in what becomes a bloody military stalemate.
1983	23 October: the US marine compound at Beirut airport is destroyed by a suicide bomber: 241 are killed.
1984	7 February: US President Reagan announces the retreat of US forces from Lebanon to American warships offshore.
1987	December: the Palestinian uprising or *intifada* begins in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
1988	July: the eight-year Iran–Iraq War ends.
1990	2 August: Iraq invades Kuwait.
1991	16 January: Operation Desert Storm. Allied air attacks against Iraqi troops in Kuwait begin
	24 February: the Allied ground offensive against Iraq begins.
	27 February: US President Bush announces hostilities with Iraq will cease at midnight, hours after the liberation of Kuwait City.
1993	September: the Oslo Accords are signed between the PLO and Israel.
2000	September: the second Palestinian uprising or *intifada* begins.
	12 October: USS battleship *Cole* is attacked by al-Qaeda in Aden harbour, Yemen, killing 17 US sailors.
2001	11 September: al-Qaeda uses passenger planes to attack the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, DC.

Table 12.1 *(Continued)*

2003	20 March: the invasion of Iraq begins shortly after a 48-hour deadline for Saddam Hussein to leave the country expires.
	9 April: US marines help crowds to topple a giant statue of Saddam Hussein in Firdous Square, central Baghdad. Widespread looting breaks out unhindered in the Iraqi capital.
2009	4 June: US President Obama gives a speech in Cairo designed to launch 'a new beginning' for relations between the United States and the Muslim world.
2011	17 March: the UN Security Council passes Resolution 1973 authorizing a no-fly zone over Libya to project the Libyan population from the government's troops.
	31 December: US troops removed from Iraq under an agreement signed between Baghdad and Washington.
2014	June: Iraq's second largest city, Mosul, falls to the forces of so-called Islamic State, the violent Islamist rival to al-Qaeda.
	August: US President Obama announces the start of an air campaign against Islamic State forces in Iraq and then Syria. This was subsequently named Operation Inherent Resolve.

in the wake of the defeat it suffered during the First World War. The United States consequently intervened to limit the imperialist ambitions of both the French and British. In the aftermath of the Second World War, America was increasingly drawn into the Middle East, first to replace the rapidly declining power of the British Empire but also to counter the military and ideological influence of the Soviet Union. The end of the Cold War has seen American foreign policy dominated by the consequences of what Fred Halliday labelled 'the greater West Asian crisis': instability, state weakness, radicalism, and violence that dominate a region including the Middle East, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Ever since the attacks of 9/11, instability in this region has forced it to the top of Washington's list of grave concerns (Halliday 2005: 130).

The growing importance of the Middle East to US foreign policy since 1945 has been driven by geostrategic, economic, and domestic concerns. Geostrategically the region sits at the junction of three continents, in close proximity to the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf, and America's main rival during the twentieth century, the Soviet Union. As the Cold War intensified, the USA came to regard the Middle East as second in order of strategic importance to Europe. Historically the region has supplied as much as 32 per cent of the world's oil and has 58 per cent of the globe's proven oil reserves (Shlaim 1995: 35). The United States' own dependence on Middle Eastern oil slowly increased during the twentieth century but then, with the discover of shale gas, declined during the twenty-first century. However, American policy towards the region has been shaped by a keen appreciation of the global economic significance of its oil reserves and the need to have unrestricted access to them. The creation of the state of Israel in 1948 and its long-running conflict with its Arab neighbours has likewise dominated US foreign policy. For strategic, ideological, and domestic political reasons within the USA, Israel has enjoyed a very strong alliance with the USA. Strategically, the US has perceived Israel as a reliable ally at the centre of the Middle East from the Cold War onwards. In domestic American politics, lobby groups supporting Israel have always had the ability to organize public support in favour of a very close and supportive relationship (see Controversies 12.1).

CONTROVERSIES 12.1: THE INFLUENCE OF THE 'ISRAEL LOBBY' ON UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY

In March 2006, two respected professors, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, published an article entitled 'The Israel Lobby' in the *London Review of Books* (Mearsheimer and Walt 2006) and a subsequent book (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007). The article caused an explosion of controversy and debate across the United States. Mearsheimer and Walt, two of the most influential realists working in international relations, argued that America's support for Israel ran counter to US national interests. They examined Israel's role as an ally in the war against terrorism, its vulnerability to attack by its neighbours, and the

moral case for American support. They concluded that after the Cold War, Israel had become a strategic and political burden and US support for it had directly damaged American interests.

They went on to examine why, given what they saw as the high costs of this support, it continued. They concluded that an Israeli lobby, a 'loose coalition of individuals and organisations who actively work to steer US foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction', was responsible. Given the highly polemical nature of debates in the United States surrounding the Middle East in general and Israel in particular, it was no surprise that the article ignited an extended and at times bitter response. Amongst their most trenchant critics was Alan Dershowitz, along with Walt a professor at Harvard (Dershowitz 2006). Dershowitz argued that the paper was 'filled with errors and distortions', with quotations 'wrenched out of context', facts mis-stated, and 'embarrassingly poor logic'. Given what he saw as the poor quality of the scholarship and analysis, Dershowitz went on to question Mearsheimer and Walt's motives, implying that they were driven by anti-Semitic motives.

The controversy that the 'Israel Lobby' writings caused indicates the passions and sensitivities surrounding the issue in US foreign policy circles. However, some sections of Mearsheimer and Walt's arguments were factually incorrect. They also attributed a unity of viewpoint to an ideologically diverse set of organizations. One of the central accusations of the article, that the Israeli lobby played a key role in driving the USA to invade Iraq, takes a complex and multifaceted issue and reduces it to a single cause. This is not an academically sustainable explanation. However, Michael Massing, in a much stronger and more thoughtful paper, sets out in detail the manner and extent of the influence those organizations seeking to persuade the US government to pursue a pro-Israeli policy have (Massing 2006). It is Massing's reasoned and well-sourced argument that needs to be debated in a calm and analytical fashion at the heart of US foreign policy making. One of Mearsheimer and Walt's key criticisms was that anyone seeking to question the American–Israeli special relationship was intimidated by accusations of anti-Semitism. Dershowitz's response went a long way to proving that point at least.

Within Washington, the president is primarily responsible for shaping America's policy in the region. However, both houses of Congress, the Senate and the House of Representatives, are empowered to oversee foreign policy and have historically provided an influential point of access for those individuals, companies, lobby groups, and countries seeking to shape US policy. Washington is overflowing with think tanks and policy experts whose sole purpose is to influence the US government's development of foreign policy generally and Middle Eastern policy specifically (Hudson 2005: 296). The high level of politically motivated intra- and inter-state violence in the region has forced it to the forefront of US media coverage. This in turn has caused Middle Eastern politics to loom large in the foreign policy concerns of the educated and mobilized section of American public opinion. Middle East policy is hence developed in the full glare of the media spotlight, subject to intense discussion, lobbying, and analysis. A US president neglects this fact at his or her electoral peril.

The transformation of US foreign policy towards the Middle East: from Wilson to Trump

The United States' relations with both the states and societies of the Middle East have been transformed during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The extent and nature of this change can be gauged by comparing the tone, content, and reception of a series of landmark speeches by American presidents that have had far-reaching consequences for the region. On 8 January 1918, as the First World War drew to an end, American president Woodrow Wilson addressed a joint session of the United States Congress in Washington, DC (Wilson 1918). The USA, under Wilson's leadership, had been drawn into the war against its better judgement and the president was determined to shape the peace settlement in a way that would make another world war impossible. Wilson faced two major obstacles in securing this goal. The first was the conflict's main protagonists; the European states themselves. For Wilson, they represented all that was wrong with international relations: indulging in secret, even conspiratorial, agreements amongst themselves while simultaneously competing to expand the territorial extent of their non-European empires to dominate other nations for their own benefit. The second emerging challenge was represented by the new ideology of Bolshevism, personified by the Russian Communist Party's seizure of power in Moscow.

Wilson's attempt to meet these challenges combined ambition with idealism. He outlined a fourteen-point agenda that would shape America's post-war diplomacy. The speech called for transparent public diplomacy, open markets, and collective security.

However, it was the twelfth point of Wilson's speech that led directly to the transformation of the Middle East. He demanded that the non-Turkish-speaking nationalities that had been ruled by the now defeated Ottoman Empire 'should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development'. These words were seized upon by Arab nationalists across the region. Wilson's promotion of self-determination for previously oppressed nations became a touchstone for those Arabs seeking to escape the imperial ambitions of the Ottomans, then the British and French troops who controlled the region. The subsequent formation of the League of Nations under Wilson's direction placed direct limits on the imperial ambitions of both France and Britain. In effect, Wilson can be seen as the father of the modern independent state in the Middle East (Dodge 2005: xii–xix).

Eighty-four years later, on 29 January 2002, President George W. Bush addressed Congress, giving his annual State of the Union Address. It had only been four months since al-Qaeda launched its devastating attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington. Like Wilson before him, Bush invoked the powerful imagery of a nation at war, a 'war against terror' which 'is only beginning'. Bush stressed that America faced two enemies in this war: the 'terrorist underworld' responsible for 9/11 and the allied states who were seeking to develop weapons of mass destruction. These allies were grouped in 'an axis of evil' whose 'regimes pose a grave and growing danger' (Bush 2002a). Two of the three members of this axis, Iraq and Iran, were key Middle Eastern states.

This speech heralded what developed into the Bush Doctrine, a potentially revolutionary approach to international relations. It forged weapons of mass destruction and terrorism into one homogeneous threat to the continued security of the American people that was primarily located in the Middle East. George W. Bush, unlike Woodrow Wilson, believed that the best way to meet this threat was to restrict the right to sovereignty of errant Middle Eastern states. All means necessary were to be deployed to ensure that rogue regimes did not support terrorism or develop weapons of mass destruction. In a startling contrast to Woodrow Wilson's fourteen-point speech and his promotion of self-determination, the Bush Doctrine was greeted with widespread hostility across the Middle East. President Bush's attempt to link the fight to the promotion of democracy was largely dismissed and the Bush Doctrine rejected as a new form of American imperialism (Harvey 2003; Bush 2002b). The logic of the Bush Doctrine led directly to the invasion of Iraq and regime change there. The ensuing civil war this caused greatly destabilized the Middle East and all but dissipated the genuine empathy felt for the American people in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. Whereas Wilson's ambitious and idealist approach to the Middle East increased the prestige and standing of the United States in the region, the Bush Doctrine and the cataclysmic aftermath of the Iraqi invasion has driven anti-American sentiment to new levels of hostility.

Seven years after President Bush addressed Congress, his successor, Barack Obama, gave a speech at Cairo University on 9 June 2009 specifically designed to undo the damage he thought President Bush had done to US relations with the Middle East and the wider Muslim world. Obama recognized that US policy during the Cold War had treated Muslims as proxies, ignoring their own concerns and aspirations. Obama went on to define the Arab–Israeli conflict as a major source of tension. He set out to explain America's 'unbreakable bond' with Israel but then acknowledged the suffering that Palestinians had gone through in struggling to gain their own homeland. The solution, he argued, was that both the Israelis and Palestinians should have their own states; and to obtain this, the Israelis had to stop building settlements on occupied Palestinian land. Finally, Obama explained the 'enormous trauma' caused to the US by the attacks of 9/11 but accepted that this had led to mistakes. He committed himself to closing down the American prison at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, which had become synonymous with American prisoner abuses during the 'war against terror'. In his speech Obama was signalling to the Muslim world that the US had made a number of mistakes since the Cold War, especially in its relations with the Middle East. He was calling for dialogue, understanding, and a new start in relations. However, by placing the solution of the Arab–Israeli conflict at the centre of his new approach, he set a very high and unobtainable measure of success. Obama spent a great deal of time during his first presidential term trying and failing to broker a peace deal between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority. In his attempt to revive the peace process, John Kerry, Obama's secretary of state during his second term, visited Israel eleven times over the course of one year but also failed to achieve any sustainable breakthrough, leaving the commitments

Obama gave in his Cairo speech in tatters (Allin and Simon 2016).

On 21 May 2017, early in his presidency, Donald Trump gave a major speech on the United States' relationship with the Middle East in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia. In marked contrast to the speeches given by president's Wilson, Bush, and Obama, President Trump's speech made it very clear that idealism had no place in the United States' relationship with the region: 'we are not here to tell other people how to live, what to do, who to be, or how to worship'. Instead, he offered a transactional partnership where the US would sell weapons to its allies in the region, especially the oil-rich Arab states of the Gulf, and would offer an alliance in their shared fight against terrorism and their struggle to counter Iranian influence. After the costly invasion of Iraq in 2003, Trump's aim was to place major limits on the resources America would spend in the region and hence the commitments it would make.

KEY POINTS

- US foreign policy towards the Middle East has been dramatically transformed over the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.
- President Woodrow Wilson, in 1918, organized US foreign policy around the promotion of self-determination for previously oppressed people.
- President George W. Bush, after 9/11, sought to constrain the sovereignty of Middle Eastern states in an attempt to promote democracy and limit the spread of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism.
- Woodrow Wilson's foreign policy greatly enhanced the standing of the USA in the Middle East.
- The Bush Doctrine and the invasion of Iraq fuelled the rise of a powerful anti-Americanism across the region.
- President Obama sought and failed to broker a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority.
- Donald Trump started his presidency by attempting to place strict limits on America's commitments in the region.

International relations, United States foreign policy, and the Middle East

The period between the speeches of President Wilson and President Trump encompasses seventeen American presidents and their relations with a diverse group of states that spread from Morocco in North Africa, west to Iran, and from Turkey south to Yemen (see Box 12.1). The radically different policies towards the Middle East pursued by Wilson and Trump indicate how the United States' relations with the region have been transformed over the twentieth century. International relations theory needs to be deployed to assess what has driven this changing policy agenda. This theory is both descriptive and prescriptive. It allows those studying the actions of decision makers to investigate their motivations and perceptions. In addition, different approaches to international relations guide or constrain the politicians and diplomats themselves, offering the categories and units of analysis needed to understand a complex world. Three different and competing approaches to international relations can be usefully deployed to assess the United States' changing relations with the Middle East: realism, Marxism, and constructivism (discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 of this book).

BOX 12.1: US PRESIDENTIAL DOCTRINES AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Doctrines are developed by specific presidents to map out a grand strategy to deal with pressing foreign policy issues. The aim is to focus governmental resources on the most serious problem or threat the president believes is facing the United States.

The Truman Doctrine

Announced on 12 March 1947, in a speech before Congress, it committed the USA to defend Turkey and Greece against Soviet aggression.

The Eisenhower Doctrine

Announced on 9 March 1957, it offered US military and economic aid to any Middle Eastern state threatened by international communism.

The Nixon Doctrine

On 25 July 1969, faced with the growing cost of the war in Vietnam, the USA aimed to develop regional allies to act as proxies in the Cold War struggle against the Soviet Union. In the Middle East these proxies were Israel, Iran, and Saudi Arabia.

The Carter Doctrine

Announced in the January 1980 State of the Union Speech, as a response to the invasion of Afghanistan, it committed the

USA to deploy military force to counter Soviet intervention in the Persian Gulf.

The Clinton Doctrine

Announced by Martin Indyk, a senior official on the National Security Council, on 18 May 1993, it committed the USA to 'dual containment', placing sanctions on both Iran and Iraq.

The Bush Doctrine

Developed in response to the attacks of 9/11 and set out in the January 2002 State of the Union Address and the *National Security Strategy of the United States*, published in September 2002, it promised to fight terrorism and countries that developed weapons of mass destruction, and encourage democratization in the Middle East.

The Obama Doctrine

Developed over two speeches in December 2009, it was designed to distance the United States from the costly and controversial invasion of Iraq by placing limits on when America would use force to intervene in other states. Such interventions, Obama claimed, would henceforth conform to international law and take place in partnership with international institutions and regional organizations.

Realism, the USA, and the Middle East

Against the background of the Cold War, realism rejected any appeal to morality as a dangerous diversion. The realist approach stresses the anarchical nature of international relations, ungoverned as these relations are by any higher power to adjudicate between competing states, all seeking to maximize their power in an uncertain world. For Hans Morgenthau, decision makers 'think and act in terms of interest defined as power', allowing for predictability and a common understanding of state behaviour (Morgenthau 1985: 5). Morgenthau's approach appeared to explain the evolution and comparative stability of the Cold War, a world divided into two multi-state alliances, where each superpower dominated its weaker allies. Realism's descriptive and predictive abilities apply equally to the Middle East, with one of the longest-running conflicts in modern diplomatic history: the Arab–Israeli dispute, the eight-year Iran–Iraq War, and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

The Marxist approach

However, a series of damaging critiques of the methodological assumptions underpinning realism have shaped two useful alternatives: Marxism and constructivism. Marxist approaches to international relations argue that the states that realists see as their central unit of analysis have to be placed in a much wider context. This stresses the socio-economic dynamics within which the state and the international system itself were formed. Marxists argue that there are three levels of analysis operating within international relations (Cox 1986: 220). The determinant level shows how a society organizes its economic production. This, Marxists argue, shapes power relations within societies: who owns the means of production and who they employ to work for them. This in turn frames how political and military power is structured to protect the economic organization of society. It also defines how people within that society think about their lives and roles.

From a Marxist perspective, the Cold War was not primarily about two states maximizing their own power but a clash of two very different modes of production attempting to impose their specific economic model on the rest of the world (Halliday 1994: 103). Marxists certainly recognize the importance of the political and military power of the state, but argue that it has been created within a specific set of socio-economic circumstances, determined in the last instance by the mode of production. First, states are dominated and act in the interests of those who own the mode of production; in advanced capitalist countries it is the bourgeoisie. It is these economic entrepreneurs who, in search of new markets and resources, use state power to move across the world, imposing a capitalist mode of production upon weaker societies as they travel.

Finally, Marxists argue that the international system is structured by hierarchy and not anarchy, by the dominance of a hegemon. Marxists would argue that Woodrow Wilson, in calling for open markets and the end of European imperial domination, was attempting to reorder international economic and political relations in a way that would be of primary benefit to the United States. From this perspective, US policy in the Middle East is designed to defend its economic and political domination of the region. A Marxist approach to international relations provides powerful insights into the motivation of the US government and the vulnerability of regimes in the region to American power.

However, Marxists have a propensity to overstate the economic rationale shaping US policy to the exclusion of other incentives. There is a tendency to assume that the US government is always acting to further the interests of their multinational corporations. This can lead to a focus on oil and a reduction in the influence of ideology, belief, and perception in shaping the policy making. It is this tendency to neglect the influence of ideas and perceptions that has given rise to the final approach to international relations examined here: constructivism.

Constructivism

Constructivism places great explanatory weight on the role that ideas, culture, and norms play in the policy decisions of politicians and diplomats. Preconceived ideas about the situations that statespeople find themselves in then become a crucial variable that shapes how the policies are chosen. For constructivists, belief systems constrain and ultimately direct those at the pinnacle of state power. A state's collective understanding of its own identity is a key factor in how diplomats perceive their national interests (Wendt 1999: 20; Ruggie 1998: 14).

In the context of the United States' relations with the Middle East, American politicians' perceptions of the region are a crucial factor. Douglas Little persuasively argues that US policy towards the Arab world has been decisively shaped by three ideological dynamics. The first is the United States' own collective self-image, which perceives America as selflessly reaching out to the region to share with it the benefits of its own political and economic system. Secondly, Little argues, American popular culture has, over many years, perceived the Middle East to be backward looking, prone to violence, and dangerously unstable. Finally, this negative perception is reinforced by a contrastingly positive perception of Israel. Little argues that this has fuelled a mutual incomprehension between the Middle East and the United States that has given rise to mistrust and violence (Little 2002: 2–33).

KEY POINTS

- Given the length of time under consideration and the diversity of states in the Middle East, international relations theory is needed to understand US foreign policy towards the region.
- Realism stresses the instability of the international system, with states maximizing their power in competition with each other. This helps scholars understand the Middle East as dominated by interstate war and conflict.
- Marxism perceives the international system as structured by hierarchy, not anarchy. US foreign policy in the region is designed to defend its economic and political dominance and access to oil.
- Constructivism stresses the role that ideas and norms play in foreign policy making. US interaction with the Middle East is thus structured by its own self-image and what policy makers see as the 'backwardness' of Middle Eastern societies.

The United States, the Cold War, and the Middle East

The dominant global dynamic shaping the United States' relations with the Middle East has been the Cold War, from its origins in the aftermath of the Second World War to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989. On one level, realists would argue, the demands of the Cold War simplified diplomacy for the United States. The preferences and even personal morality of individual statespeople could be subsumed within what Henry Kissinger has termed 'the ethic of responsibility'. United States interests under this rubric were straightforward: it must maximize its interests, defined as power, in the face of the Soviet threat (Gaddis 1987: 221). The Middle East became one of many arenas within which global struggle ensued. It was divided between the two superpowers as they each struggled to build the largest stable alliances possible.

However, the realist simplicity of rolling the Middle East into a global struggle for allies and dominance had a number of unintended consequences. The complexities of struggles based within the Middle East subsystem itself did not always sit well within the Cold War mindset that dominated thinking in Washington. Often ideologies originating within the region, Arab nationalism and Islamic radicalism for example, were co-opted into the struggle against the Soviet Union, which had profound ramifications for the domestic politics of the Middle East. Alternatively, they were simply misdiagnosed as a tool or product of Soviet interference. The unintended

consequences and misperceptions of US foreign policy during the Cold War still haunt the region's politics today.

The Middle East became an early venue for the opening stages of the Cold War. The Soviet Union had stationed troops in Iran during the Second World War but had agreed to withdraw them at the end of hostilities. However, by 1945 it looked increasingly reluctant to do so. In addition it encouraged locals to establish an autonomous government in the Iranian province of Azerbaijan, north-west of Tehran. US alarm increased when Stalin's attention focused on Turkey, attempting to pressure Ankara into sharing control of shipping through the Dardanelles. The US administration concluded that the Soviets' central aim in the region was to gain control of Turkey. Their unease increased when evidence came to light of Soviet meddling in the Greek civil war. President Truman sought to meet this challenge in March 1947 by announcing the Truman Doctrine, a $400 million package of economic and military aid for Greece and Turkey. However, Truman appears to have overestimated Stalin's interests and goals in the region. Stalin regarded Arab nationalist politicians as unreliable bourgeois nationalists (Brown 1984: 199). The Soviet Union under Stalin treated the Middle East as a sideshow.

Eisenhower and the Middle East

United States–Soviet competition over the Middle East and the problems this caused increased with Stalin's death and the Eisenhower presidency. Nikita Khrushchev, the new leader of the Soviet Communist Party, announced a new policy towards the third world during the Congress of the Communist Party in 1956 at which he denounced Stalin (Westad 2005: 68). It resulted in 'rubble diplomacy', a substantial programme of economic aid directed at third world states, including Egypt.

The Eisenhower administration, developing Truman's fears of Soviet encroachment through Turkey, colluded with Britain to organize the 'northern tier' of the Middle East in an anti-Soviet alliance, the Baghdad Pact. This grouped Iraq, Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan in a mutual defence agreement, strengthened by US military assistance. Eisenhower further escalated US involvement and Cold War tensions in the Middle East in 1957. Worried that a reduction in British influence in the region would be exploited by the Soviet Union, he countered with a promise of direct US military intervention and economic aid in support of any state which felt under threat from communist aggression. Congress voted to support what become known as the Eisenhower Doctrine in 1957. However the only intervention sanctioned was to send marines to stop the eruption of the Lebanese civil war of 1958. This was a purely regional conflict, not connected to the Cold War.

Increasing US involvement in the Middle East under Eisenhower drove growing resentment amongst Arab nationalists, who were battling to defend their newly won independence and minimize outside interference in the region. In spite of US political rhetoric stressing freedom from Soviet domination, Arab politicians found it increasingly difficult to distinguish between the dying days of a British imperialism justified in terms of progress and development, and a militarized US presence promoting capitalism and democracy. It was this sentiment that caused the Baghdad Pact to be denounced by both Syria and Egypt as an attempt to sustain foreign domination rather than the protection of its members.

It was a bloody military coup in Iraq in July 1958, orchestrated in the name of Arab nationalism and freedom from foreign domination, that overthrew the British-installed monarchy and broke the Baghdad Pact. The rising tide of Arab nationalism, primarily driven by the remnants of British imperialism, was continuously mistaken by Washington during this period as a stalking horse for international communism. Egypt's radical president, Gamal Abdul Nasser, became the personification of this problem. In 1955 he struck a major arms deal with Czechoslovakia. However, this transaction had more to do with his military confrontation with Israel than a desire to join the Czechs as a member of the Communist International. When the US government reversed a promise to help fund the building of the Aswan dam in 1956, Nasser announced the nationalization of the Suez Canal. This triggered a wave of economic nationalism across the third world that was driven by a desire for economic sovereignty and development, not international communism.

Britain and France, in a secret compact with Israel, attempted to reverse the nationalization of the Suez Canal and remove Nasser from power by invading Egypt in October 1956. Public opinion across the Middle East saw the Suez crisis as the personification of European imperialism, an illegal conspiracy using

military force to reverse Arab independence. For President Eisenhower the invasion of Egypt coincided with Soviet tanks crushing the Hungarian uprising in Budapest. The US deployed financial and diplomatic pressure to force France and Britain into a humiliating withdrawal, turning Nasser into a hero across the third world and making Arab nationalism the dominant ideology in the Middle East.

Nixon, Kissinger, and the 1973 war

The next presidential doctrine to have significant consequences for the Middle East was developed by Richard Nixon. Inheriting an increasingly unpopular and costly war in Vietnam from his predecessor President Johnson, Nixon set out a doctrine whose goal was the empowerment of proxy states in the third world to replace the already overstretched United States. The application of the Nixon Doctrine to the Middle East encouraged Saudi Arabia and especially Iran and Israel to become regional policemen, enforcing an American policy agenda at second hand. The Shah of Iran seized upon his newfound responsibilities with gusto, demanding larger and larger amounts of sophisticated weaponry from Washington in return. Any doubts that this raised within the US administration were placated, temporarily at least, by the Shah's help in destabilizing the Ba'athist regime in Iraq, who were in receipt of Soviet weaponry. The Shah's support for the Cold War reached its peak when he agreed to send 1200 troops to support the Sultan of Oman in his struggle against a Soviet-supported uprising in the restive province of Dhofar in 1973.

However, the nexus between an essentially regional conflict and a global Cold War created a crisis with the Arab–Israeli War of 1973–4. During 1969–70, the Soviet Union dramatically increased its military support for Egypt in the aftermath of the cataclysmic defeat of 1967. Although Egyptian President Sadat distanced himself from Moscow in 1972, the Soviets felt compelled to threaten direct intervention in the face of massive US support for Israel in the 1973–4 war. Nixon responded by putting US nuclear forces on DEFCON 3, the stage preceding all-out war. Although the Soviet Union backed down and the Arab states suffered another defeat at the hands of Israel, Cold War manoeuvring in an essentially regional conflict had very nearly brought the superpowers into direct confrontation in the Middle East.

Carter, Iran, and Afghanistan

It was Democratic president Jimmy Carter who inherited the fallout from Nixon's decision to give unconditional backing to the Shah of Iran. Throughout the 1970s, the Shah had become increasingly detached from Iranian society. His oil-fuelled development strategies and land reform backfired, causing rapid unplanned urbanization, inflation, and unemployment. US support for an increasingly autocratic and corrupt monarch only increased his unpopularity. This allowed the opposition to combine a powerful Iranian nationalism that portrayed the Shah as an American stooge with a religious moralism that focused on his family's decadence and corruption. It resulted in the 1979 Islamic revolution, which brought Ayatollah Khomeini to power and mobilized the population behind a radical manifesto of Islamism and anti-Americanism.

The Carter administration was further engulfed in a crisis of Middle Eastern origin when the Soviet Union airlifted thousands of troops into Afghanistan on Christmas Eve 1979. The invasion was almost certainly defensive, attempting to limit the threat that political Islam posed for the USSR's own Muslim population. However, Carter saw it in terms of the Cold War's balance of power. On 23 January 1980, during his State of the Union Address, the president announced the Carter Doctrine. Consciously modelled on the Truman Doctrine before it, Carter announced that 'the implications of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan could pose the most serious threat to the peace since the Second World War'. Carter concluded by placing the region at the heart of the Cold War and stressing its centrality to US interests. In order to turn Afghanistan into the Soviets' Vietnam, the USA quickly built an unwieldy alliance of convenience. It brought together the logistical capacity of Pakistan's military intelligence with funding for the Arab Gulf states and, most damagingly, a motley group of Afghan and Arab Islamic radicals. It certainly succeeded in trapping the Soviet army in Afghanistan, fighting a long, costly, and unwinnable war of attrition. Their eventual ignominious defeat and withdrawal hastened the end of the Cold War and America's victory in it. However, the unintended consequence of Afghan war was to empower a transnational network of Islamic radicals, who, having defeated one superpower, were on 9/11 emboldened to strike at the other.

Reagan and Lebanon

If the empowerment of al-Qaeda under the auspices of the Carter Doctrine represents the worst unintended consequence of the United States Cold War policy in the Middle East, then the Reagan administration's involvement in Lebanon in the early 1980s indicates how a Cold War prism could distort the basis to policy making. With his focus on combating the 'evil empire' of Soviet communism, President Reagan placed the military threat of the Soviet Union at the core of his foreign policy. The Arab–Israeli conflict and regional dynamics more generally were downgraded in the face of a renewed Cold War. The Reagan administration's unquestioned support for Israel meant it backed Prime Minister Begin and Defence Minister Sharon's plans to invade Lebanon in June 1982 and drive Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization from the Middle East. Ariel Sharon sold the plan to Washington by claiming it would weaken two of the USSR's main clients, the PLO themselves and Syria (Shlaim 1995: 55). However, the US military were drawn into the resultant conflict as peacekeepers. By analysing the violence in Lebanon through a Cold War lens, US military power was deployed to back one side of a largely indigenous civil war against another. As a result the USA became party to an increasingly bloody civil war. In retaliation a suicide bomber attacked US facilities in Beirut in 1983, killing 241 American marines and forcing the USA to leave Lebanon in trauma and defeat.

The realist approach to international relations that shaped US policy on the Cold War assumed that the conflict was global and that 'interests defined as power' could be deployed in a bipolar struggle. However, in the Middle East this approach led to profound miscalculations about which regimes to support and the consequences of that aid. The USA, under different presidents, twice intervened in the Lebanese civil war using the Cold War as justification. They took sides in a bitter and bloody civil war, paying a terrible price, and exacerbated the violence. With the creation of the coalition that funded a disparate group of Islamic radicals in Afghanistan, the country simply became another arena for the Cold War. Once the Soviets had left, the USA turned its back on Afghanistan and the organizations it had created, with tragic consequences. Afghanistan, largely ignored by the USA and the international community, become the launch pad from which the attacks of 9/11 were planned and executed, providing the most traumatic example of Cold War blowback in the history of US diplomacy.

KEY POINTS

- The Cold War acted as the dominant issue shaping US relations with the Middle East. However, seeing the region simply as an arena for a global struggle had profound unintended consequences.
- The Cold War meant that ideologies originating from within the region, Islamic radicalism and Arab nationalism, were either seen as tools of Soviet influence or weapons with which to fight Soviet power.
- In 1947, as the Cold War took hold, President Truman announced his doctrine to meet the challenge of Soviet expansionism in the region. However, this overestimated Moscow's interest in the Middle East.
- President Nixon in 1973 faced the tension between the regional Arab–Israeli conflict and the Cold War, when the Soviet–American rivalry in the Middle East brought the world to the brink of a nuclear confrontation.

The United States and Israel

The United States' alliance with Israel has grown progressively closer from the founding of the state in 1948 until today. The American government now gives Israel $3 billion a year in military assistance and economic aid (Hudson 2005: 289). However, it is the United States' supportive relationship with Israel that is most often cited as a cause of Arab and more generally Muslim anger towards American foreign policy. The founding of the state of Israel led to the dispossession of tens of thousands of Palestinians and to six major wars. It is both the continued exile of a large diaspora of Palestinian refugees along with Israel's occupation of the West Bank of the Jordan River and the Gaza Strip that fuel resentment towards both Israel and the United States. Despite the cost, in terms of Arab public opinion and diplomatic censure, the American–Israeli relationship shows few signs of weakening. Both realist and constructivist explanations can be usefully deployed to examine the enduring nature of this alliance.

Constructivism and the special relationship

Constructivist explanations focus on the ideas and perceptions that the American public and more importantly their politicians have about Israel (see Key

quotes 12.1). This, they argue, is the key to explaining the strength and durability of the alliance. The relationship is deeply anchored into both history and cultural affinity. First, the murder and suffering that the Jewish population of Europe were subjected to during the Holocaust forms the backdrop against which the Israeli state was built. The empathy generated by such horrors is the bedrock upon which the American–Israeli relationship is constructed. The argument that the Israeli state was founded as a safe haven for all Jews, both the survivors of the Holocaust and those facing persecution elsewhere, meets with deep approval in the United States. In addition Israel's supporters argue that since 1948 it has been surrounded and outnumbered by hostile neighbours bent on its destruction. These arguments in favour of American support of Israel are strengthened by the perceived similarities that the US public sees between their own history and that of Israel. The USA, like Israel, is a settler nation created by waves of mass immigration from Europe. At the core of America's own myth of nationhood is a pioneering spirit. This self-perception of pioneers building a state and society from scratch is very close to Israel's own myth of formation. Central to America's identity in the wider world is its democracy, a democracy that Israeli politicians are keen to stress they share. Added to these cultural affinities are religious ones. Various forms of Christianity dominate American society and the idea of Jews returning to the holy land resonates with their own reading of the Bible. This potent mix of history, national self-identity, and religion has been carefully cultivated and deployed by those mobilizing public opinion and lobbying the American government to pursue policies that favour Israel.

The realist explanation of US–Israeli relations is much more straightforward. It downplays or even discounts ideological influences. Instead it stresses Israel's role as a staunch ally during the Cold War and its aftermath. Surrounded by Arab regimes with ties to the Soviet Union, realists would argue, Israel has provided a reliable partner in an unstable region. The United States' interests were continually furthered by giving the strategic, diplomatic, and economic support Israel needed to prosper. Realists examine the strength of US–Israeli relations in terms of the geostrategic utility to America of Israel's position in the Middle East.

The final argument seeking to explain the longevity and strength of the alliance would point to domestic electoral calculations. There is a well-organized lobby designed to ensure US policy is very supportive of Israel. The leading organization in this lobby, the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), has a membership of 100,000 and a yearly budget of $47 million (Massing 2006). By deploying both realist and constructivist arguments and tactics, AIPAC has successfully mobilized American public opinion in support of Israel.

A second electoral calculation is the Jewish section of American society. Although estimated to number only between 2 and 3 per cent of the electorate, as a group they have one of the highest voter turnouts, with 89 per cent living in electorally key states, with enough votes to return a president (Bard 1994: 81). However, it is easy to overstate the electoral significance of the Israeli lobby. The majority of Jewish voters have a tendency to vote Democrat, reducing their tendency to change their preference on the basis

KEY QUOTES 12.1: THE MIDDLE EAST THROUGH AMERICAN EYES

Because of their own pioneer heritage, Americans were even more apt than Europeans to identify with lurid images of brave, outnumbered settlers of European stock taming an arid land in the face of opposition from ignorant, fanatical nomads—wildly distorted and unrealistic (albeit lasting) though these images were.

(Khalidi 2004: 119)

From the dawn of the Cold War through the twilight of the twentieth century, US policy makers insisted time and again that Islamic radicals, Israeli prime ministers, and Iraqi dictators had merely misunderstood America's good intentions and that better understanding would produce better relations. Over the years, however, critics from Tel Aviv to Tehran have retorted that they understood those intentions all too well and that the peculiar blend of ignorance and arrogance that characterised US policy would effectively prevent Americans from ever truly understanding the region and its people.

(Little 2002: 2–3)

America saw the world in rather simple terms: on one side was the Soviet Union and militant Third World nationalism, which America regarded as a Soviet tool; on the other side was political Islam, which America considered an unqualified ally in the struggle against the Soviet Union.

(*Mamdani 2004: 120*)

Iraq provided a blank screen on which Americans were free to project anything they wanted, and because so few Americans had anything directly at stake there, many of them never saw more than the image of their feelings. The exceptions, of course, were the soldiers and their families, who carried almost the entire weight of the war.

(*Packer 2005: 382*)

The failure of state-building in Iraq raises a series of profound questions about US foreign policy in the wake of 9/11. The decision to invade and remove Saddam Hussein was meant to signal a new approach to international relations. The 'war against terror' was constructed in the broadest possible terms, uniting the disparate themes of terrorism with weapons of mass destruction and the instability of postcolonial states. By justifying the invasion in terms of democratising the Middle East, President Bush evoked a renewed, if supercharged, spirit of Wilsonian idealism. The sovereignty of states in the so-called 'developing world' was now dependent upon their ruling elites meeting US-defined responsibilities.

(*Dodge 2006: 198*)

of Israeli policy. Secondly, a broad consensus exists in mainstream politics around the issue of Israel.

Harry Truman, the US president in 1948, set a pattern for the way future American presidents dealt with Israel. In reaction to the horrors of the Holocaust, Truman pushed for Jewish emigration to Palestine. He also deployed diplomatic pressure at the United Nations in favour of dividing Palestine between a Jewish and Arab state, and authorized the recognition of Israel as soon as it declared statehood on 15 May 1948. Truman, clearly influenced by a close presidential election that year, ignored State Department warnings about the negative effect that such recognition would have on US influence in the wider region.

Eisenhower and Israel

As the Cold War escalated, Truman's successor President Eisenhower became increasingly aware of the damage that America's relations with Israel were causing in the Arab Middle East. This alarm reached its peak with the Suez crisis in October 1956. Eisenhower, because the Anglo–French–Israeli invasion of Egypt coincided with US presidential elections, came face to face with the electoral mathematics surrounding Israeli policy. Eisenhower, casting these concerns aside, pushed the United Nations to condemn the invasion and was re-elected with a landslide over the Democrats. He then went on to push for UN sanctions against Israel. Faced with a concerted public campaign to overturn this decision he confronted the issue directly in a television broadcast which resulted in an Israeli climb-down (Little 2002: 92).

Eisenhower, in the run-up to and during the Suez crisis, decided that US interests in the Middle East and its Cold War foreign policy more generally were directly harmed by its relations with Israel. With this foremost in his mind, he ignored the potential electoral risks, and took his argument directly to the American people, over the heads of the American–Israeli lobby, defending his policy. Eisenhower subsequently implemented the approach he thought best served America's interests and Israel was forced into a compromise.

The Arab–Israeli conflict descended into open warfare for the third time in 1967 under Lyndon B. Johnson's presidency. The stunning victory that Israel inflicted on its Arab neighbours confirmed in American public opinion the David and Goliath image of Israel fighting to win against all the odds. Johnson, who believed that Eisenhower had been far too lenient on Egypt during the Suez crisis, saw the discrediting of Nasser by the Israeli military as a welcome retort. The victory of America's ally Israel over Arab states supported by the Soviet Union was similarly perceived as beneficial to US power. The aftermath of the Six-Day War left Israel in occupation of Jordanian, Egyptian, and Syrian territory. It also cemented American–Israeli diplomatic and military relations, removing any ambiguity from the partnership.

Nixon and Yom Kippur

The Nixon Doctrine of developing regional proxies had strengthened Israel's status as a key ally in the fight against Soviet influence. The surprise attack launched

by Syria and Egypt during the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur placed that policy in doubt. The Arab armies made early gains, with Egyptian tanks crossing the Suez Canal and the Syrians threatening to retake the Golan Heights. Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir made a desperate plea to Nixon for help and the president responded with a massive airlift of 11,000 tons of military equipment and munitions that gave the Israeli military yet another victory. However, such sustained US support for Israel's success triggered a united Arab response: the oil embargo against America and Western Europe.

For the Nixon administration, the 1973 war highlighted the destabilizing effect of the ongoing Arab–Israeli conflict on the region and America's interests. Nixon's foreign policy guru, Henry Kissinger, was assigned the task of defusing the conflict. Through 1974 and 1975 Kissinger flew back and forth to the region, first brokering a disengagement agreement and then persuading Israel to undertake a limited redeployment of troops in return for even greater American military assistance, oil supplies, and economic aid.

Following the Yom Kippur War, Kissinger was unable to secure a sustainable peace settlement because Israel was unwilling to embark on further territorial compromise. It was regional diplomacy that broke the stalemate, with Egyptian president Anwar Sadat boldly flying to Jerusalem in November 1977. By this time Jimmy Carter was in the White House and he had to structure a peace process that would capitalize on Sadat's statesmanship. It created the first sustainable peace settlement between Israel and one of its Arab neighbours. The signing in Washington of the March 1979 Treaty of Peace between Egypt and Israel ended thirty-one years of hostility between the two states and was built around the 'land for peace' formula originally suggested by the UN in 1967. Israel agreed to withdraw its troops from the Sinai Peninsula, which it had seized from Egypt. In return America compensated Israel economically and committed itself to continued generous financial and military support for both Israel and Egypt. Thus the United States underwrote the peace treaty with considerable economic incentives for both sides. However, for the hawkish Israeli prime minister, Menachem Begin, this was not the beginning of a comprehensive peace deal with the Palestinians or Israel's Arab neighbours but the splitting of the Arab front. Vague references in the treaty to Palestinian self-rule were never acted upon, and Israel was free to continue building houses for Israelis in the territory on the west bank of the Jordan River it had seized in 1967.

James Baker and the Oslo peace process

It took the ending of the Cold War in 1989, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and then defeat in 1990–1 to trigger another sustained American attempt to solve the Arab–Israeli conflict. President Bush's secretary of state, James Baker, came face to face with Arab resentment at the continuing stalemate with Israel when he wasbuilding the diplomatic and military coalition needed to eject Iraq from Kuwait. In the aftermath of that victory he applied economic pressure to Israel and shuttle diplomacy to the wider region to set up a multinational peace conference in Madrid in October 1991. Despite the diplomatic fanfare surrounding the talks in Spain and the subsequent Palestinian–Israeli negotiations in Washington, no breakthrough was achieved. Like Sadat's initiative in 1977, it was direct interaction between the main protagonists, the Palestinians and Israelis, which delivered a breakthrough in 1993. The negotiations were tellingly hosted by Norway, who were judged a more neutral arbiter than the United States. The resulting Israel–PLO Declaration of Principles was signed in Washington under the watchful eye of President Clinton. But this was not a fully-fledged peace treaty but a set of guidelines and aspirations for further negotiations. Those negotiations delivered restricted Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and parts of the West Bank, but the turbulent and violent history of Palestinian–Israeli relations since 1993 shows the profound limitations of the Oslo process. The Oslo process was followed by a separate peace treaty between Jordan and Israel. Again, however, the deal was basically bilateral, representing the work of the two states who signed it, not the success of muscular American diplomatic intervention (Shlaim 1995: 120–40).

The presidency of George W. Bush proved to be just as pro-Israeli as the presidencies of Clinton and Reagan before him. Barack Obama, as indicated in his 2009 Cairo speech, attempted to push the peace process forward by demanding that the Israeli government freeze the building of settlements on occupied Palestinian land. This was seen as the bare minimum needed to restart meaningful negotiations. After agreeing to a nine-month freeze, the Israeli government renewed its building programme and in doing so made the chance of a major breakthrough in

negotiations negligible. In Obama's second term, his secretary of state, John Kerry, attempted to push the peace process forward by visiting Israel eleven times between 2013 and 2014. However, even this level of US commitment could not overcome the distrust between the Palestinian National Authority and Israel (Allin and Simon 2016). After the tensions and mistrust of the Obama presidency, Donald Trump has, once again, recognized Israel as America's major ally in the region.

US policy towards Israel after the Cold War has been based on similar if not identical foundations to those which guided policy after 1948, with Israel's military superiority being maintained at all costs. This, it is hoped, will give Israel the confidence to negotiate with the Palestinians and the Arab states from a position of unchallengeable strength. However, with the brief exception of James Baker in 1991, US diplomacy has proven to be chronically unable or unwilling to put enough pressure on Israel to deliver the compromises needed to reach sustainable peace settlements. This would involve implementing the United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, passed in November 1967. Israel would give up enough land on the West Bank for the Palestinians to create a sustainable state. It would also give back to the Syrians all of the territory of the Golan Heights it seized in 1967 in return for a peace settlement.

Now that the dynamics of the Cold War are in the past it is the constructivist argument, stressing an ideological affinity between US policy makers, their population, and Israel, which best explains American–Israeli relations. US opinion, both at a policy-making level and across the public in general, favours Israel to such an extent that the US appears diplomatically unable to apply the pressure needed to force the Israeli government to compromise. With US backing, Israel is militarily and diplomatically strong enough not to have to enter into sustained or meaningful negotiations with the Palestinians, facilitating an ongoing conflict with no end in sight. The United States' continued support for Israel has certainly fuelled resentment among Arab and wider Muslim public opinion. It also prohibits any viable solution to a violent conflict at the heart of the Middle East. The direct costs of this conflict to the United States have been the destabilization of a region of great geostrategic importance to them and a continued sense of resentment and anger. It is this anger that al-Qaeda and Islamic radicals have continued to exploit for recruitment and justification.

KEY POINTS

- The United States' supportive relationship with Israel is most often cited as a cause of Arab and more generally Muslim anger towards American foreign policy.
- Constructivist explanations of this relationship focus on the empathy generated by the horrors of the Holocaust, the pioneering spirit of Israeli state builders, its democracy, and an affinity between US Christians and Jews returning to the Holy Land.
- As the Cold War escalated, President Eisenhower became increasingly aware of the damage America's relations with Israel were causing in the Arab Middle East and attempted to constrain Israeli foreign policy in the Suez crisis of 1956.
- During the Arab–Israeli War of 1967, on the other hand, President Johnson saw the victory of America's ally Israel over Arab states that were supported by the Soviet Union as beneficial to US power.
- President Nixon's extended support for Israel in the 1973 war resulted in the Arab oil embargo that quadrupled the world price of oil.
- It took the end of the Cold War to see a major breakthrough in Israeli–Palestinian relations with the Oslo agreements of 1993 that delivered limited self-rule to the Palestinians.
- US policy remains focused on maintaining Israel's military superiority in the hope that this will give Israel the confidence to negotiate a substantive peace deal with both the Palestinians and Syria.

The United States and oil

There is a tension at the heart of United States' policy towards the Middle East between two of its primary interests: first the almost unquestioning support for Israel, but second is maintaining the flow of oil at the lowest possible price from the Gulf region. The Arab Gulf states have been historically the leading financial backers of the struggle against Israel. The USA, when faced with the deep antipathy between Israel and the Arab Gulf states, has struggled to keep its relations with the two separate and the Arab–Israeli conflict confined to the front-line states surrounding Israel.

In examining America's relations with the oil-rich states of the Middle East, the Marxist approach to international relations provides a series of powerful insights. As the American economy's dependence

upon oil increased after 1945, US government policy increasingly became concerned with the stability and pliability of the main oil-producing states in the region. US military power, both overtly and covertly, has been repeatedly deployed to remove troublesome governments or support those whose ruling elites are close to Washington. Marxists would argue this is a clear example of the United States' political and military power being deployed to further the economic interests of American multinational corporations.

The interests of major American oil companies in the Middle East have slowly grown since the First World War. President Wilson's 'open door' policy was perfectly suited to their needs, giving access to the oil-rich former territories of the Ottoman Empire coveted by British and French companies. As the United States economy rapidly expanded during and after the Second World War, the US government came to view access to Middle East oil fields as a crucial issue for national security. Diplomacy and the military power of the American state would be deployed to ensure US oil companies could operate in the region on the best possible terms. With the rise of strident Middle Eastern nationalisms demanding economic sovereignty, this aim often clashed with the policies of regional governments.

The USA, Iran, Iraq, and oil

Two post-1945 examples show the extent and nature of US government attempts to shape the Middle East oil industry to its own advantage. In April 1951, the Iranian parliament, dominated by nationalists led by Mohammed Mosaddeq, passed a law nationalizing the Iranian oil industry. This triggered a clandestine intelligence operation by the US Central Intelligence Agency and the British. In August 1953, this operation reached its peak when the Iranian army, trained and advised by the American military since the Second World War, launched a coup that removed Mosaddeq and placed the pro-American Shah back on his throne. In the aftermath of the coup, nationalization was halted and the American oil company ARAMCO gained a 40 per cent share in the industry (Khalidi 2004: 90–1, 104).

Similar motives drove US interference in Iraq between 1958 and 1963. In 1958, a coup by army officers, led by Colonel Abdel Karim Qassim, seized power in Baghdad in the name of Arab nationalism. The new government set about drafting a law to nationalize the Iraqi Oil Company, which was jointly owned by British and American businesses. The Kennedy administration saw in Baghdad a dangerously radical government with increasing ties to Moscow seeking to reduce American control and profits from Middle Eastern oil. The American embassy in Baghdad established ties with dissident officers in the Iraqi army and a second coup in February 1963 ousted Qassim just before the nationalization of oil was due to take place.

US interference in both Iranian and Iraqi politics may have postponed oil nationalization but had dramatic unintended consequences. In Iraq, the 1963 coup and a counter-coup later that year sparked off a series of violent military takeovers, which resulted in the Ba'ath party coming to power in 1968. They eventually nationalized the oil industry and were only removed in April 2003 by a US invasion. In Iran, once reinstalled, the Shah ruled until 1979 but was similarly removed from power, this time by a violent revolution inspired by Islamism and anti-Americanism.

OPEC and Israel

The United States' ability to keep the Arab–Israeli conflict separate from its relations with the oil-producing states of the region also dramatically broke down in 1973. The growing influence of nationalism across the region began to define the oil policies of the Arab Gulf states. During the 1960s, these countries became increasingly disgruntled by the low price of oil on the world market. This frustration resulted in the formation of the Organization of Oil Exporting Counties (OPEC) in 1960. During the Arab–Israeli Yom Kippur War of 1973, the Gulf states became increasingly outraged at the United States' large-scale and overt support for Israel. In retaliation, OPEC's Arab members deployed the oil weapon against America. The price of oil was increased by 70 per cent and production was cut by 5 per cent a month with an embargo placed on exports to America until Israel made major territorial concessions. By December 1973, the price of oil was four times what it had been in October. After twenty-five years of support for Israel, America's policy had finally caused it a direct and painful economic cost.

President Nixon sent Henry Kissinger to the Middle East to directly intervene in the conflict and he persuaded Israel to make some limited territorial compromises. Even though he convinced OPEC to lift its embargo in 1974, the price of oil continued to rise, reaching a new height when the news broke that

another staunch American ally, the Shah of Iran, had been removed by an Islamic revolution in 1979. The USA, in an attempt to limit the damage of Islamic radicalism in Iran, supported Iraq in the eight-year Iran–Iraq War. But Iraq's invasion of Iran in 1980 further pushed up the price of oil.

Oil prices did not substantially fall until 1985 but United States oil policy towards the Middle East is still haunted by the unintended consequences of its actions. This was personified on 2 August 1990, when Saddam Hussein, previously supported by the United States in his war with Iran, invaded Kuwait. President George Bush Sr.'s response to this breach of international law summed up over fifty years of US policy towards the Gulf:

> "An Iraq permitted to swallow Kuwait would have the economic and military power, as well as the arrogance, to intimidate and coerce its neighbours—neighbours who control the lion's share of the world's remaining oil reserves . . . We cannot permit a resource so vital to be dominated by one so ruthless. And we won't."

(Bush 1990)

Although the war to liberate Iraq was launched in the name of democracy and a post–Cold War New World Order, the region and its ruling regimes looked very similar in the aftermath of the invasion to before. US policy, focused amongst other things on the security of its oil supplies, had once again chosen to back the regimes it was familiar with, in the hope that conservative stability would deliver oil at the best possible price. With this in mind, Marxist explanations of US policy do have strong analytical purchase. The USA has clearly and repeatedly intervened in the region to secure economic advantage. However, the danger of this approach is that economic motivations are promoted to the exclusion of all others. Especially since the rise of domestically produced shale gas, America's relations with the Middle East cannot simply be reduced to the quest for cheap oil and the creation and defence of pliant regimes to deliver it.

KEY POINTS

- United States support of Israel has often been in conflict with its policy of obtaining oil from the Gulf at the lowest possible cost.
- As the American economy's dependence upon oil increased after 1945, US government policy became concerned with the stability and pliability of the main oil-producing states in the region.
- In 1953 the USA supported a coup in Iran aimed at stopping the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry.
- In the aftermath of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the USA put together a multinational coalition to liberate Kuwait and stop Saddam Hussein dominating oil supplies from the region.
- The USA has repeatedly intervened in the Middle East to secure its economic advantage, but its policy cannot be reduced to a focus solely on oil.

US foreign policy after the Arab Spring

The foreign policy of the Obama administration was shaped, at the start, by a desire to distance his administration from that of George W. Bush, reduce America's involvement in the region, and try to reverse the damage done to the United States' international reputation by the unilateral policies of his predecessor. During his speech in Cairo in June 2009, Obama promised 'a new beginning between the United States and the Muslim world' (Obama 2009a). Three months later, when he addressed the United Nations General Assembly in New York, he guaranteed 'a new era of engagement with the world' in which the US would strive to act within multinational coalitions and abide by international law (Obama 2009b). The Obama Doctrine would focus on global rights, responsibilities, and reciprocal exchange between states. This was 'certainly optimistic, rational and practical' but would ultimately remain an 'empty vessel' until it was 'filled with the details of real life' (Ignatius 2009).

A closer examination of Obama's foreign policy indicates a deliberate attempt at balancing the aims of realists, pursuing what they perceive to be America's national interest, with those of liberal idealists seeking to use America's power to enforce a global regime of human rights and democracy. Thomas Donilon, the national security advisor from October 2010, and Robert Gates, the secretary of defence Obama chose to inherit from the administration of George W. Bush, were both unapologetically realist. However, Obama also appointed high-profile liberal idealists to key positions within the foreign policy making structure.

These included Susan Rice, his ambassador to the United Nations, Michael McFaul, the senior director for Russian policy on the National Security Council (NSC), and Samantha Power, who also served in a senior role on the NSC.

This balance between realism and liberal idealism saw the administration, on one hand, stress the centrality of national interests and an abhorrence of the ideologically driven foreign policy they thought had caused the previous administration so much trouble. As Secretary of State Clinton said in April 2009, 'Let's put ideology aside; that is so yesterday.' However, the liberal idealists in the NSC were also influencing policy. When Obama accepted his Noble Peace Prize in Oslo in 2009 he directly addressed how and when the United States should go to war. He certainly went to great lengths to stress the international standards that had to govern the use of force and promised that the US would now follow these standards in all future interventions. However, he also went out of his way to stress that 'force can be justified on humanitarian grounds'. The 'slaughter of civilians by their own governments', and stopping civil wars and genocide, could all now justify the use of America's military might against other states (Obama 2009c).

In the aftermath of the Cairo speech, the Obama administration did attempt to push the Israeli–Palestinian peace process forward. It was, however, also trying to move away from what it saw as previous administrations' dangerous obsession with the Middle East. America's foreign policy was now to be 'rebalanced' towards Asia, the Pacific region, and specifically China (Lizza 2011).

This move away from the Middle East and the careful balancing between realism and liberal idealism was put under strain by the events surrounding the Arab Spring in 2011. The Arab Spring or new Arab Awakening was triggered by a tragic event in the Tunisian town of Sidi Bouzid in December 2010. Mohamed Bouazizi, a vegetable seller, set himself on fire after being harassed by allegedly corrupt Tunisian officials. His subsequent death caused outrage and mass demonstrations across Tunisia that, after twenty-nine days of protest, forced the president Zine el Abidine Ben Ali to flee into exile after twenty-three years of rule. This unprecedented upsurge in popular protest against the corrupt, dictatorial, and sclerotic regimes of the Middle East soon spread across the whole region.

President Mubarak of Egypt had been Washington's long-term and very valuable ally in the region. He had a close relationship with Israel and actively supported its attempts at breaking the power of Hamas, the organization of Palestinian radical Islamists who governed in the Gaza Strip (Lynch 2011, 35). Demonstrations calling for Mubarak to go quickly dominated central Cairo. After increasing violence against the protestors and a series of belligerent speeches by Mubarak, Obama announced his support for the Egyptian president's removal, 'what I indicated tonight to President Mubarak—is my belief that an orderly transition must be meaningful, it must be peaceful, and it must begin now' (Obama 2011a).

The aftermath of Mubarak's removal saw a Muslim Brotherhood candidate, Mohamed Morsi, elected as Egypt's president. Initially, the Obama administration supported the democratic transition and the new government it produced, only to see it removed in a violent coup led by the senior military figure, General Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, who went on to take the presidency himself. As the Sisi government set about repressing the Muslim Brotherhood and imposing its coercive authority on the country, the Obama administration was left to urge restraint while also protecting America's strong ties with the country's military establishment and pursuing its desire to see a stable Egypt as an ally in the region.

After Mubarak's removal another even greater foreign policy crisis presented itself in Libya. This would test the careful balance between realists and liberal idealists around which Obama had built his foreign policy team. The protest movement against the dictatorial rule of Libyan president Colonel Muammar Gadaffi centred on the eastern city of Benghazi but quickly spread west along the coast towards the capital Tripoli. The United Nations, with American backing, responded to the regime's violent attempts to suppress the revolt by tightening sanctions on Libya and forcing the country into diplomatic isolation. However, Obama's own foreign policy team were divided about the best way to proceed. Defence Secretary Robert Gates advised that a proposed no-fly zone would have little effect and that anyone suggesting that 'a big American land army' should be sent into the Middle East needed to 'have his head examined' (Gates 2011). But the liberal idealists in the administration, McFaul, Power, and Rice, backed up by Secretary of State Clinton, persuaded the President to push for a UN Resolution that would give authorization for a no-fly zone to protect the Libyan demonstrators against the regime. The result was UN Resolution 1973,

adopted on 17 March and enforced by US, French, and British war planes. Obama, in a speech justifying the use of force against Gadaffi's regime, echoed his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, arguing that the US had spent thirty-one days working with 'our international partners to mobilize a broad coalition' and 'secure an international mandate to protect civilians' (Obama 2011b). Three times during this speech Obama justified military action by saying it stopped what would have become a massacre if Libyan troops had entered the city of Benghazi.

The use of American military force against the Libyan army raised a series of issues about Obama's foreign policy. First was the issue of consistency. After some hesitation, Obama called for the removal of the Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak and then used force against the Libyan government. However, at exactly the same time, the government of Bahrain, with the assistance of Saudi Arabian troops, used military force to suppress demonstrations calling for democracy. These demonstrators were much more peaceful than the comparable protestors in Libya. Although US diplomats unsuccessfully tried to broker a compromise, their criticism of the Bahraini and Saudi use of violence to suppress pro-democratic protests was very muted. No-one in Washington suggested deploying diplomatic sanctions, let alone military force, against either government. Secondly, more analytically nuanced critiques of the 2003 US invasion of Iraq stressed not only its illegality but also its unsustainable presumption that the deployment of American military power could deliver a better life for Iraqis. Libya is one of the least institutionalized states in the Arab world. The deployment of American airpower may have temporarily stopped Libyan government forces from taking back control of Benghazi but it did not immediately remove Gadaffi from power and could not help reconstruct the Libyan state or guarantee the protection of the people's human rights or the rule of law in any post-Gadaffi future. This left President Obama open to similar criticisms to those levelled at President George W. Bush, that in listening to the liberal idealists in the NSC he was too quick to deploy military force, with little or no idea what the long-term consequences would be. In short, he tried to deliver on liberal idealist promises through the short-term application of military power without paying sufficient attention to the ramifications of his actions. Libya's descent into violent civil war after Gadaffi's removal only heightened this critique.

The Obama administration's attempt to balance realism and liberal idealism was severely tested in Syria as peaceful demonstrations against the Assad regime in 2011 descended into civil war in 2012. It is the United States' failure to prevent the rising tide of suffering and the mass outflow of refugees and to punish the regime's repeated use of chemical weapons that may well come to be seen as its major foreign policy failing in the Middle East.

Initially, after the removal of Presidents Ben Ali in Tunisia and Mubarak in Egypt, Obama's call for Assad to go appeared to be a sensible recognition of regional trends. However, the Syria regime proved to be much more resilient than the US government had predicted and the resultant civil war became a crucible for regional and international competition, with Iran and then Russia backing Assad while Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates funded the diverse militias, increasingly mobilized round a radial Islamism, trying to remove him.

With the United Nations Security Council deadlocked, the Obama administration could not build the international coalition needed either to intervene militarily or to impose a peace settlement. In August 2012, as the Assad regime deployed higher and higher levels of violence to stay in power, President Obama declared that the use of chemical weapons would be a 'red line' for the US government. Only a day later, the Assad regime killed over a thousand people in a suburb of Damascus using chemical weapons. The Obama Doctrine, outlined by the president just after he took power, committed the US to using its military power from within an international coalition. With Russia supporting Assad, the United Nations would not support the use of military power to punish him. When the British prime minister failed to get the backing of his own parliament to join Obama's collation against Syria, Obama tried and failed to get the backing of the US Congress for the use of military power against Assad. Obama's failure to punish Asad for crossing his own red line, using chemical weapons against the Syrian people, greatly weakened America's credibility across the region and heightened a sense of insecurity amongst US allies in the Middle East.

If history will judge Obama's inconsistent policy towards Syria as his greatest failure in the Middle East, then the deal he stuck with Iran to restrain its nuclear programme may well be judged as a triumph of American-led diplomacy. The international community had been negotiating with Iran since 2003 in an attempt

to persuade it to curb its nuclear programme, with a widespread fear that if this failed Iran could become a nuclear power. With increasing threats by Israel to use military force to stop Iranian proliferation, the Obama administration made a diplomatic solution a top priority. They succeeded in July 2015, when Iran signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. In return for relief from stringent international sanctions, Iran agreed to a decade-long regime of strict international inspections and unambiguous restrictions on its use of nuclear technology. For the Obama administration this was clear proof that its multilateral approach to the Middle East could work. By forming a coalition with the European Union and gaining Russian and Chinese support through the United Nations they managed to avoid the use of military force through extended diplomacy backed up by the use of tough multilateral sanctions.

The Obama administration's approach to the Arab Spring and the broader Middle East shows both the strengths and weaknesses of the 'Obama Doctrine' in action. A key aim of the president's policy was to move away from the costly intervention in Iraq. This drove a reduction in US troops and their final removal from the country in December 2011. However, the US left an unstable and deeply corrupt government that used divisive sectarian rhetoric to rule Iraq. As a result, the radical and violent Islamist group, the so-called Islamic State, managed in 2014 to seize Iraq's second largest city, Mosul, and make moves to seize the capital, Baghdad. Obama was forced to redeploy the American military, launching operation 'Inherent Resolve' to once again drive the forces of radical Islamist terrorism out of Iraq.

The successful use of multilateral diplomacy in resolving the Iran nuclear issue highlights the benefits of Obama's approach to multilateral diplomacy and negotiations over the use of military force. However, the military intervention in Libya with United Nations backing certainly removed Gaddafi but left the country in the midst of violent instability. In addition, the inability to build consensus in the United Nations Security Council about imposing a peace settlement on Syria or punishing the Assad regime for their use of chemical weapons indicates the clear limits of multilateral diplomacy in the region. The Syrian civil war has certainly caused unprecedented human suffering and regional and global instability. That said, those that have criticized Obama's policy and advocated unilateral US military intervention have not explained how instability of the kind caused by forceful regime change in Iraq and Libya could be avoided in Syria. The fact that in spite of his very different ideological and rhetorical approach to the Middle East, Donald Trump has not markedly changed his administration's approach to the Syria conflict or the Iran nuclear deal indicates that Obama's caution about the risks of using military power may be shared by his successor.

Conclusion: from Woodrow Wilson to Donald Trump—continuity and change in US foreign policy towards the Middle East?

The attacks on the United States by al-Qaeda on 11 September 2001 gave rise to an intense debate about the causes and consequences of America's relations with the Middle East. Where had this radical ideology of violence come from? Who or what was to blame? Eventually the Bush Doctrine committed the United States to fighting a global war against terror, stopping the spread of weapons of mass destruction in combination with the muscular promotion of democratization across the Middle East. However, the invasion of Iraq launched by George W. Bush highlighted the distinct limitations of America's power to transform the region. Barak Obama, when entering the White House, recognised those limitations and sought to reduce America's engagement with the Middle East. However, the Arab Spring of 2011 and Syria's descent into a long-running civil war once again forced the region to the top of America's foreign policy agenda. Like Barack Obama, Donald Trump also began his presidency attempting to restrict the resources and energy that US foreign policy invests in the Middle East. However, he quickly discovered that a purely transactional approach to the region may not be enough to defend, let alone extend, America's interests.

One of the most far-reaching and bold attempts to change US foreign policy towards the Middle East since Woodrow Wilson resulted in tens of thousands of people dying (Dodge 2007). Barack Obama was in part elected to succeed George W. Bush because of foreign policy mistakes, most of them in Middle East, that Bush had made during his two terms in office. Although Obama's election campaign was driven by powerful idealist rhetoric, his foreign policy approach once he was in office sought unambiguously

to return US foreign policy to its realist roots. Early on in his presidency, Obama did speed up the timetable for America troop withdrawal from Iraq, only to leave the country vulnerable to radical and violent extremism. In addition, the rhetoric and promises placed at the heart of the speech he gave in Cairo were not delivered on, and this is bound to further deepen the already powerful cynicism across the Middle East towards America's foreign policy goals and motives in the region.

The combination of its oil reserves, the presence of major allies like Israel and Saudi Arabia and the ongoing instability that has given rise to radical Islamism means no American president has been able to reduce the central role that the Middle East plays in US foreign policy. America's economic and strategic interests and its ideological commitments mean its will remain deeply engaged in the region for decades to come.

KEY POINTS

- In the wake of 9/11 the Bush Doctrine committed the United States to fighting a global war against terror, stopping the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and pursuing the muscular promotion of democratization across the Middle East.
- The invasion of Iraq launched in March 2003 by George W. Bush appeared to combine all three motives.
- The majority of realist academics were against the invasion, arguing that it was a miscalculation driven by ideology and not by a rational assessment of US interests.
- It is the overtly ideological promotion of democracy that sets the Bush Doctrine apart from previous US foreign policies towards the Middle East.
- The US invasion of Iraq resulted in the collapse of the state, a violent civil war, and tens of thousands of deaths. It will almost certainly be viewed as a major defeat for the USA.

QUESTIONS

1. What has been the balance between interests and ideology in the evolution of the United States' relations with the Middle East since the First World War?
2. What accounts for the differences of approach to the Middle East between President Wilson after the First World War and George W. Bush after 9/11?
3. Does a realist or constructivist approach best explain US foreign policy towards the Middle East?
4. What accounts for President Eisenhower's policy towards Israel?
5. Can the application of the Nixon Doctrine to the Middle East be judged a success?
6. Was the Carter Doctrine an overreaction to the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan?
7. Was Ronald Reagan right to see the Lebanese civil war as an extension of the Cold War?
8. What accounts for the durability of America's special relationship with Israel?
9. Is Marxism the best approach to explaining the United States policy towards oil in the Middle East?
10. Did the OPEC oil embargo of 1973 represent a failure of US policy towards the Middle East?

FURTHER READING

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A detailed discussion of the United States' relations with radical Islam.

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A wide-ranging historical account of US–Middle East relations.

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A very detailed historical work on the relationship between Cold War and the third world, stressing the role of ideology.

You can find a range of online resources to support your learning at www.oup.com/uk/cox_stokes3e/.

13

The USA and the EU

Michael Smith

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Introduction

This chapter explores one of the key relationships in which the USA has been involved since the end of the Second World War: the transatlantic relationship with the European integration project. This is a relationship not with a single state, but with a densely institutionalized region, which has itself grown and become markedly more prominent in the world arena over the past half-century. American foreign policy makers have generally been consistent in their support for the integration project, but it has challenged US foreign policy in a number of important areas. The focus of the chapter is thus on the ways in which US policy makers have developed images of the European Community (EC) and now the European Union (EU, Figure 13.1) on the challenges posed by European integration for US policy processes and the uses of US power, and on the ways in which these challenges have been met in the very different conditions of the Cold War and post–Cold War periods.

This is a relationship with a history, and also one that has seen considerable change, both in the context within which it is conducted and in the content with which it is concerned. In terms of the context, US policies towards European integration have spanned both the Cold War and the post–Cold War periods, and have also contended with the growth of globalization and its consequences. In terms of content, US policy makers have had to adapt to a European project that has expanded both in scope and scale, and which has become a central feature in the foreign policies of individual European Union member states, some of whom are among the USA's oldest and closest allies.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the ways in which American foreign policy makers have promoted or responded to these changes, and to point out some of the key areas

of tension that have emerged from the changing relationship between the USA and European integration. The chapter begins with a review of key factors in the evolution of the relationship within US foreign policy up to the end of the Cold War, focusing especially on US images of the European integration processes and on responses to change. This is followed by an analysis of key trends and tensions during the period. The third part of the chapter then focuses on the ways in which the post–Cold War period has thrown up new changes and challenges, and the ways in which these have been dealt with by US policy makers, again with attention to images and responses. As with the analysis of the Cold War period, this is followed by an evaluation of trends and tensions in the period between 1990 and 2016 covering three two-term presidences: those of Bill Clinton, G. W. Bush, and Barack Obama. We then devote a little time to looking at the quite disturbing impact which Donald Trump has had on US relations with the European Union. Certainly, if the headlines are to be believed, the relationship has entered into new and uncharted territory. In the conclusion we then raise a number of wider questions about the capacity and willingness of the USA to shape and adapt to European integration, and thus about the future of the USA–EU relationship.

Figure 13.1 Map of the European Union.

US foreign policy and European integration

Images and adaptation

As shown elsewhere in this volume (Chapter 6), the end of the Second World War ushered in a period of uncertainty in US foreign policy. The emergence of the US 'liberal order' was not a preordained outcome, and indeed the initial US position on continued involvement in Western Europe was shaped by the desire to retreat to the American homeland. But the development and definition of the Soviet threat between 1945 and 1947 led to a redefinition of US policies towards Europe that had a profound effect on European integration (DePorte 1986; Grosser 1982; Heller and Gillingham 1996).

Central to this reorientation of US foreign policy was the Marshall Plan—the system of financial and other assistance that contributed to the recovery and stabilization of the Western European countries, and thus, it can be argued, to the initiation of European integration itself. Secretary Marshall's speech made at Harvard University in June 1947 (see Key quotes 13.1) concentrated on the need for immediate economic assistance, but also had an explicitly political aim: to stabilize (or in some cases, to create) democratic institutions and free markets, which were seen as two sides of the same coin. Between 1947 and 1950, the European Recovery Programme (ERP) channelled $19 billion of US aid to those countries that accepted the ground rules, and by so doing also accentuated the Cold War division of Europe by excluding the countries of the developing Soviet bloc (Hogan 1987; Milward 1984). Because the aid was given explicitly on the basis that the European recipients would co-operate in its distribution and the associated planning processes, it is possible to see this as the seed of the eventual European integration process. When in 1950 Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet proposed the Schuman Plan for the creation of a European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), this was generally welcomed by the US administration as a further step in the recovery and consolidation process. The ERP and the ECSC together, it can be claimed, expressed the US position in the political economy of Western Europe and led to the 'Americanization' of large parts of European industry.

KEY QUOTES 13.1: US POLICY MAKERS AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION IN THE COLD WAR

The Marshall Plan Speech, 1947

It is evident … that, before the United States Government can proceed much further with its efforts to alleviate the situation and help the European world on its way to recovery, there must be some agreement among the countries of Europe as to the requirements of the situation and the part those countries themselves will take in order to give proper effect to whatever action might be undertaken by the Government. It would neither be fitting nor efficacious for this Government to undertake to draw up unilaterally a program designed to place Europe on its feet economically. This is the business of the Europeans. The initiative, I think, must come from Europe. The role of this country should consist of friendly aid in the drawing up of a European program and of later support of such a program so far as it may be practical for us to do so. The program should be a joint one, agreed to by a number, if not all, of Europe's nations.

(Marshall 1947; George C. Marshall was US secretary of state)

The transatlantic relationship: a long-term perspective

I have often discussed with European friends the different requirements for a nation with global responsibilities to those with more regional concerns. The use of the word global is not meant in any arrogant fashion. Nor is it to deny the interests that several European nations retain in areas of the world beyond their continent. But the sheer scope of American interests engages us in a different set of perspectives and imperatives. I am persuaded that despite periodic inconsistencies (mainly on our part) and even more frequent crises of policy disagreement (emanating frequently from the European side) members of the alliance can still forge a strong consensus on most issues of importance … [but] now may well be the appropriate moment for all of us—Europeans and Americans—to take a new look at where we should be going together and how we should get there … The two pillars of a 'smarter' relationship, in my opinion, are: increasing respect for the differences in our alliance; and a more coordinated approach—across the board—to all political, economic and security issues with our European allies.

(Eagleburger 1984; Lawrence Eagleburger was US under-secretary of state for political affairs)

But this was not the whole story. Alongside the ECSC, US policy makers had come—in some cases reluctantly—to the conclusion that they needed a long-term commitment to European security, not just to economic and political recovery. This was what lay at the bottom of the North Atlantic Treaty (NAT) signed in 1949 by the USA and fourteen other members (Western European plus Canada). It is important to note here that the NAT and subsequently the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are not strictly 'European integration'—they were explicitly transatlantic, with a dominant US presence expressed in military and political structures. One immediate consequence, though, was a focus on the need to rearm West Germany in order for it to play its part in the defence of the 'Western alliance'. This led the French to propose a further and dramatic step in European integration: the creation of a European Defence Community with a multinational structure and a common military command. While not sponsored by the Americans, this was eventually accepted as a way to create a robust European 'pillar' of the Atlantic alliance. When in 1954 it was defeated, ironically by the French National Assembly, the Americans and the British stepped in to provide an alternative structure through which the West Germans could eventually join NATO and be rearmed as part of the Atlantic alliance (Fursdon 1980).

By the mid-1950s, therefore, it could be argued that the Americans had achieved all of their key goals in respect of European integration. They had fostered European cooperation in key industries, and had managed to get the West Germans integrated into the NATO command and political structure. Led by the State Department, US foreign policy elites saw European integration as an unquestioned and positive contribution to Western security, and also to the development of a liberalized 'Western' world economy centred on the Atlantic area. The Eisenhower administration wanted this to go further, through the entry into European institutions of Britain and other key NATO allies. Thus, when the original six member states of the ECSC set out in 1955 to create a European Economic Community (EEC), US policy makers saw this as positive, despite the fears of some that it might constitute a protectionist economic bloc that would damage American agricultural and industrial interests (Winand 1993).

It is important to note, though, that this position was not aligned with some of the emerging realities of life in the 'new Europe'. The British proved strangely reluctant to immerse themselves in what they saw as a second-rank organization, partly because of their perceived 'special relationship' with the USA itself. At the same time, the French saw US enthusiasm for British membership as a sign of a malign hegemony, which led them ever more strongly to emphasize the EEC's role as a point of resistance to US policies. President Charles de Gaulle, who held power in France from 1958 to 1969, was especially sensitive to the American threat, and made constant efforts to turn the West Germans and others away from their Atlanticist orientation. As a result, when in 1962 John F. Kennedy made a major speech calling for the development of a true 'Atlantic partnership' between the United States and a uniting Europe, this became a major point of friction rather than a rallying point. Throughout the remainder of the 1960s, the discourse among US policy makers about 'Atlantic partnership' or 'Atlantic community' was countered by calls from Paris for resistance to US domination and for the use of the EEC as a means of fighting back (Calleo 1970; Cleveland 1966). Ironically, this was accompanied by a substantial flow of US foreign direct investment into the EEC—a factor that was to contribute greatly to integration at the transatlantic level, and to become a significant influence on US foreign economic policy (Krause 1968).

The late 1960s, therefore, saw contradictory trends in US policies towards European integration. On the one side, there was the continuing rhetoric of 'Atlantic partnership' as part of the broader Cold War system—a rhetoric which defined the EEC as part of the 'Western system' and as the economic equivalent of NATO. This rhetoric was strongly dedicated to the leading role of NATO in Western security, and incidentally as a major source of US leverage over the countries of Western Europe. On the other side, there was the rhetoric of 'adversarial partnership', focusing on the challenge posed by the French and on the danger of a developing 'third way' which might turn into a European form of neutralism or non-alignment. This second rhetoric was given added force by the economic turbulence of the late 1960s, by the loss of dynamism in the US economy, and by the feeling that the Europeans had profited from US financial and military support without playing their full part in return.

Nixon to Reagan

In this context, the Nixon–Kissinger foreign policy conducted between the late 1960s and the mid-1970s played a crucial catalytic role. In economic terms,

Nixon and Kissinger subscribed to the view that the USA was an 'ordinary country' which needed to defend its national economic interests and to protect itself against those who took advantage of the liberal international economy (Rosecrance 1976). In security terms, the Nixon Doctrine implied that America's allies would have to do far more to protect themselves and pay far more towards the costs of alliance, both in Europe and elsewhere. For European integration, this policy stance held important implications. It meant that they could no longer rely on the USA as a benign hegemonic force in the global economy, and that they could no longer count on the unqualified support of the USA for European defence. US policy makers came to see European integration as much more of a problem than a solution; the EEC's development of foreign policy cooperation, with its insistence that the Community was a 'civilian power', implied to US policy makers that the Community was a means of hiding from international obligations and developing a form of the non-alignment that they feared and despised. The entry of the British into the EEC in 1973 thus could be defined not as a triumph for US policy but as a worrying move that could lead to the loss of their most trusted ally. The Nixon–Kissinger response was characteristic: Kissinger proclaimed 1973 'the year of Europe' and called for the conclusion of a new Atlantic treaty in line with the administration's idea of the global 'structure of peace' (Cromwell 1978). But this initiative, which had not been discussed with any European governments, fell on stony ground in a year when the combination of EEC enlargement, conflict in the Middle East, and an accompanying oil price crisis preoccupied European policy makers.

US policies towards European integration during the early 1970s might thus be summarized as a form of wary containment, but this misses the point that the EEC had become a genuine economic rival to the USA in a number of major areas. Although the Community's plans for economic, monetary, and political union by 1980 came to little or nothing, the 1970s as a whole gave evidence of the fact that the Americans needed the Community as much as the Community needed them. Thus the process of adjustment in US policy positions and policy rhetoric could be observed, especially during the Carter administration between 1976 and 1980: Europeans were seen as partners in interdependence and as a focus for cooperation within international institutions, although this was not without its own difficulties in a period of economic stagnation (Hoffmann 1978). European foreign policy cooperation was a source of worry, for example over the Middle East where the Community members were much more pro-Palestinian than was Washington, but as it became clear that European declarations would lead to little substantive policy change, this suspicion moderated (Allen and Smith 1983).

Much of this apparent reconciliation was dissipated by the events of the 'second Cold War' and by the arrival of the Reagan administration in 1980. Reaganism attacked the Europeans on two fronts. First, it politicized and 'domesticized' American foreign economic policies, leading to a concentration on the needs of the US economy but also to a strong emphasis on the sin of 'trading with the enemy', in this case the Soviet bloc in particular. For some Europeans, this rhetoric and the subsequent application of 'extra-territorial' measures to restrict trade with the Soviet bloc were evidence of US unilateralism and a form of imperialism; for others, such as the British, it was defined much more positively as a reassertion of US leadership. That is certainly the way the US administration saw it: the USA was the leader of the free world, and was assuming its responsibilities (Allen and Smith 1989).

The second area in which US foreign policy challenged European integration was in the development of the fledgling 'European' foreign and security policies. Here, we can see again the 'containment' aspect of the US stance vis-à-vis European integration. US policy makers felt strongly that they did not want the Community to develop in such a way as to erode NATO, or to reduce their capacity to form 'special relationships' with individual EEC member states. In pursuit of this stance, Washington was prepared to use its connections with the British and others to ensure that any new developments in the Community were moderated and always made subject to the primary role of NATO in ensuring European security (Treverton 1985; Joffe 1987). Thus during the late 1980s when the revival of the Western European Union created a platform for a distinct European defence identity, the White House was quick to emphasize the dire consequences of any attempt to duplicate or undermine NATO.

Trends and tensions

The review of US attitudes towards European integration up to the end of the 1980s reveals that the relationship as a whole was characterized by a number

of overall trends and a number of persistent tensions. For US foreign policy, a key trend was the move from apparently unqualified hegemony to a position where leadership had to be justified and legitimized (see Box 13.1). Another associated trend was what might be called the problem of leadership and followership: by the end of this period, EC member states had become far less inclined simply to follow where the USA led, but at the same time there were areas where they could not collectively follow. A third trend was in the adaptation of US policy makers' images of the EC: not surprisingly, these images often said more about the needs and priorities of US foreign policy than they did about the evolving realities of the European project, and they were also 'sticky', that is, resistant to change. Finally, US policy makers' approach to European integration was clearly conditioned to significant degrees by events in US–Soviet relations, as Cold War tensions fluctuated and evolved in periods of détente or 'new Cold War'. Thus, the European project could be seen as a pillar of the Western alliance, as a breeding ground for neutralism or non-alignment, or as a source of often intense economic competition. In reality, of course, it was often all three of these at once, with consequent implications for the focus and direction of US policy.

Alongside these trends and tensions in the images held by US policy makers went another set of significant connections and interactions. From the outset, relations between the USA and European integration were an uneasy combination of the political, the economic, and the security related. Between 1950 and 1990, the balance and linkages between these three components of the relationship grew, shifted, and evolved, and this was a key issue for policy makers in Washington. Thus, during the 1950s and 1960s, it was tempting to see the integration process as somehow separate from the political and security dimensions of the relationship, and as somehow subordinate to the demands of NATO and of superpower diplomacy. In many ways this was never true, but the 1970s disposed of the myth in no uncertain terms. The politicization of economic issues (especially in the energy crisis), the use of economic sanctions (for example against Iran, or the Soviet bloc in the 'new Cold War'), and the increasing attention to issues of high technology as matters of foreign or national security policy, all meant that US views of the 'economic' integration process needed to change. As noted above, these images were often 'sticky', and American policy makers found it difficult to adjust to the world of economic power, in which the preconditions for what later came to be termed globalization were being established. By the end of the 1980s, with the initiation of new stages of European integration through the Single Market programme, and with discussion of economic and monetary union in the EC, the tensions were still observable and if anything more severe than before.

A third set of trends and tensions, strongly related to those described above, was in the stance of US foreign policy overall, as affected by and expressed in their relationship to European integration (Smith 2000). It can be argued that three central trends are observable in US policies towards the integration project. The first can be termed 'imperial': the integration project was subsumed willingly or unwillingly within the creation and maintenance of an American empire, in which transatlantic relations were a central component (Lundestad 1998). A subset of this trend is the exercise of hegemony, and the holding of hegemonic assumptions about the nature of US–EC relations, whether these relate to trade, to monetary relations, or to foreign and defence policies (Calleo 1987). In this

BOX 13.1: TRENDS AND TENSIONS IN US–EU RELATIONS, 1945–1980S

- *Images and reality*: move from US hegemony to questioning of leadership and legitimacy; problems of 'leadership and followership'; 'stickiness' of adjustment of images and expectations in US policy making; influence of fluctuations in US–Soviet relations.
- *Politics, economics, and security*: shifting balance and linkages; intersection of the three areas, and consequent 'politicization' of economic issues especially in the 1970s (Middle East, 'new Cold War'); impact of intensification of European integration in the 1980s.
- *Empire, alliance, and interdependence*: challenges to US assumptions of European dependence; US capacity to 'divide and rule' through 'special relationships'; tensions between 'imperial' assumptions, those of 'alliance', and those of 'interdependence', affecting policies, institutions, and 'rules of the game'.

trend, US policy makers assumed that the European project was essentially dependent, that they held the power to make the rules within which integration proceeded, and that they could also detach key EC member states when the need for 'special relationships' overrode the need for a relationship with the EC as a whole.

Alongside the 'imperial' component of US policies towards European integration went two other, not always compatible, trends. One was what might be termed 'alliance', according to which the relationship with the EC was a part of the broader Western system and subject to rules and conventions about leadership and followership (Sloan 2005). As we have seen above, this dimension of US policy was consistent throughout the 1950–90 period, and the Europeans came increasingly to make their collective voices heard within the alliance structure. But this dimension was of course in tension with persistent 'imperial' tendencies, which might admit the need for alliance but also emphasize American structural dominance in all of the areas that really mattered. Both 'imperial' and 'alliance' trends were in tension with the third dimension of the relationship: that of 'interdependence'. The growth of transactions, exchange, and institutions in the Atlantic area during the 1950s and 1960s created a dense region of interdependence, in which the actions (both domestic and external) of each of those involved had implications for all of the others (Cooper 1968). During the 1970s and 1980s this reality became more apparent, and US policy makers were faced with the need to incorporate interdependence thinking into their approach to European integration. Not only this, but they were compelled to go beyond interdependence into the realm of what some observers called 'interpenetration'—where US and European societies and economies were so closely linked that it was difficult to work out 'who is us' and 'who is them'. Not surprisingly, these views were more strongly rooted in some parts of the US administrations than others, and in some administrations than others. Thus the Carter administration in the late 1970s played heavily on the interdependence theme, but this was not welcomed by those within the political system and US society more broadly who believed in the restoration of US dominance. Equally, the Reagan administrations of the 1980s emphasized the 'imperial' or hegemonic aspects of the relationship, but found themselves confounded at times by the impact of alliance politics and interdependence.

KEY POINTS

- In the early years of the Cold War, the US position in Europe was consolidated, and the European integration process was part of this consolidation.
- Nonetheless, there were tensions in US policies about the extent to which on the one hand the European project should be part of the Cold War system and the 'Western alliance', and on the other hand the basis for a more independent Europe. US policy makers' images were shaped not only by relations with the EEC, but also by Cold War priorities and by domestic needs.
- From the late 1950s onwards, US policy makers had to respond to change within the EEC, especially its continuing economic growth and the beginnings of political assertiveness. This created a kind of 'containment' policy on the part of the USA, alongside continuing support for the integration process as a whole.
- As a result, there were continuing tensions involving issues of US leadership, the linkage between political, economic, and security factors, and three strands in US policies: 'empire', 'alliance', and 'interdependence'.

After the Cold War: the US and the European Union

The purpose of this section is to explore the ways in which the changing European integration project interacted with changes in US foreign policy after 1990, and thus to arrive at an assessment of the ways in which the central trends and tensions in the relationship changed during that period. As before, the chapter looks first at images and responses in US foreign policy, and then at trends and tensions.

Images and responses

As with the end of the Second World War, the end of the Cold War ushered in a period of uncertainty and fluctuation in US foreign policy. As shown in Chapter 7, the tension between triumphalism and caution in Washington, and in the country as a whole, was a key feature of the early 1990s, as was the tension between internationalism and 'domesticism'. These tensions were still present in the early years of the new millennium, as the search for an effective 'grand strategy' in US foreign policy evoked painful and often highly partisan debates. Our interest here is in

the ways in which the EC and after 1993 the EU took their place in these debates, and in the images that US foreign policy makers deployed in their efforts to meet the challenge of renewed European dynamism.

For the George H. W. Bush administration that presided over the end of the Cold War, a number of key factors played into their redefinition of relations with European integration. One was that the end of the Cold War was a European process—albeit one with global reverberations. In consequence, it was tempting for the administration to see the EC as playing a new and special role in stabilizing and assisting the reconstruction of the eastern half of the continent (Smith and Woolcock 1993; Treverton 1992). James Baker, the secretary of state, made this abundantly clear as early as December 1989, in the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall, when he underlined the EC's role in the 'New World Order'. For Baker, the EC should enlarge to the east, and quickly, to provide the anchor for the newly liberated states of the ex-Soviet bloc. This did not mean that the US position in Europe, and especially NATO, should be abandoned; it did mean, though, that the EC was seen as a major 'subcontractor' in the establishment of a new European order. Thus the Americans were willing to give the EC a lead role in providing aid to the ex-Soviet states and in coordinating the provision of reconstruction assistance at the continental level. They were also willing to envisage a new diplomatic and security role for the EC, giving it responsibility for more of the 'hard security' issues that were likely to emerge in the 'new Europe' and also for the broader range of 'soft security' issues arising from such areas as migration or the development of human rights regimes.

This US perception was buttressed to a large degree by the evident willingness of certain European states to take the lead in the new European order. During 1990 and 1991, the negotiations that led to the Treaty on European Union and to the establishment of a Common Foreign and Security Policy for the EU led many to believe that a new era of political and defence integration was just over the horizon. As during the Cold War, the development of these new areas of integration was broadly welcomed by Washington, for reasons especially of 'grand strategy' (see the start of this section), but the EC and its members proved rather less able (or in some cases, willing) to follow through with dramatic initiatives. One of the problems for Washington in dealing with the EC and then the EU has always been the question attributed to Henry Kissinger during the early 1970s: 'If I want to talk to Europe, who do I call?' In the conditions of Europe immediately after the end of the Cold War, this question was if anything more pressing than before, but the answer was still not easy to discern.

For US policy makers, therefore, the early 1990s were years of frustration as well as expectation where the EU was concerned. The Europeans had agreed a treaty, but it took two years to get it ratified, and there were also strong limitations on the extent of EU collective action built into it. When the federation of Yugoslavia collapsed during 1991–2, with fierce fighting first between Serbia and Croatia and then between warring groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina, there were European leaders prepared to proclaim that 'this is the hour of Europe, not of the United States', and to call for a European solution to a European problem—a sentiment supported by a number of key figures in Washington (Smith and Woolcock 1993). But as the war in former Yugoslavia continued and intensified, it became apparent that the EU and its member states were singularly unprepared to deploy the 'hard power' that might have brought an early end to the conflict. As a result, the Clinton administration was eventually led to intervene, using NATO as a vehicle for the use of force against the Bosnian Serbs in 1994–5 and against the Milošević regime in Belgrade during 1999 when the Serbs attempted a forcible solution to the problem of Kosovo.

US policy makers thus had good reason by the late 1990s to be cautious about claims of EU responsibility for managing major international conflicts, even when they took place in the Europeans' backyard. They also had their doubts about the speed with which the EU moved to enlarge its membership and thus contributed to the emerging new European order. The Clinton administration's National Security Strategy focused on 'engagement and enlargement' (see Chapter 7), and the EU was assigned a key role in this process with particular reference to the continent of Europe itself. But a combination of the complexities of the enlargement process, together with the reluctance of some member states to go for a 'big bang' enlargement to at least ten new members, created an understandable frustration in Washington as the 1990s unfolded (Peterson 1996; Smith and Woolcock 1994). Here there is a key cultural difference between US foreign policy and the nature of policy making at the European level: for Europeans, the process is at least as important as the result, whereas for Americans the

result is what matters. This basic difference underlines the key fact that all US foreign policy makers need to remember when dealing with the EU: despite its impressive institutional apparatus and economic weight, the Union is not a state. Nor would most US policy makers want it to be a state, since that might very well mean that it would be much more difficult to deal with on an everyday basis as well as on matters of grand strategy.

The Clinton administrations also had to deal with the impact of the EU's changing economic structure, and with its increasing influence in the global political economy. The Treaty on European Union consolidated the gains made in the EU's Single Market programme, which by the mid-1990s had taken market integration to new levels (Hocking and Smith 1997). It also had to deal with the approach of economic and monetary union, which eventually led to the establishment of the 'Eurozone' and of the euro as a major international currency at the beginning of the new millennium. Alongside these 'internal' developments, the EU also became more active in leading international trade initiatives, in pursuing trade disputes with the USA in particular, and in taking on issues in the 'new agenda' of environmental concerns, human rights, and the like. The fact that these were often intractable issues within the USA itself, and within the US administration, frequently meant that the USA seemed less sure-footed than policy makers in Brussels—who were not slow to comment on this shift.

Towards the end of the Clinton years, a further challenge emerged from the EU. Partly as a result of the failures in Bosnia and Kosovo, in 1998 and 1999 the British and the French led a move to establish a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Whatever the motivations and expectations of those involved within the EU, the importance of this move for the discussion here is clear: this was a challenge to the idea that US priorities and NATO would automatically take precedence in matters of 'Western security', and it promised the establishment of a second centre of military power within the Western system (Howorth 2000, 2005). The response of the Clinton administration, through Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, was to caution the Europeans in terms of the 'three Ds'—no duplication of capabilities, no discrimination by Europe between third countries that would be unacceptable to the USA, and no decoupling of Europe from the USA. It was also noted that while the EU had been deeply involved in negotiations with potential new members since the early 1990s (as discussed earlier in this section), but had not yet enlarged, NATO had rapidly expanded to encompass many of the potential new EU member states as well as enlarging its broader role through devices such as the Partnership for Peace programme, which took it well into the former Soviet space (Webber 2007). At the same time, the administration continued to nurture its 'special relationships' with some of the EU member states most closely involved, especially Britain, who was its closest ally in the continuing confrontation with Iraq.

By the end of the 1990s, there was thus a dynamic and somewhat confused picture in US–EU relations. Since 1995, there had been a formal institutional link between the USA and the EU in the shape of the New Transatlantic Agenda (NTA) and its extensive action plan—an initiative taken by the USA and agreed by the Europeans for a combination of political and economic reasons, but which covered a very large number of 'new agenda' items with a global dimension (Philippart and Winand 2001; Pollack and Shaffer 2001; Steffenson 2005). But this formal link did not comprehensively or consistently cover key emerging areas of security policy, and for US tastes was rather limited in terms of the commitments made to support US policies outside Europe. Indeed, as time went on, the NTA captured less and less of what was important to key US policy-making groups, and covered more and more of those areas where the USA and the EU diverged quite strongly, for example the environmental issues surrounding the Kyoto Protocol (discussed in Chapter 21). When this was combined with glacial progress on enlargement and the concerns aroused by the development of ESDP, there was much to be cautious about in US–EU relations (Gompert and Larrabee 1997).

G. W. Bush to Obama

The George W. Bush administration initially pursued policies much like those of the Clinton administration towards the EU, with some crucial differences in policy areas that 'flanked' but did not form part of the core of relations at the European level, for example ballistic missile defence or policies towards Russia. There was also a 'hardening' of policies on the environment and other areas where the Clinton foreign policy had attempted to soften the edge of US domestic opposition. But the key event in shaping US policies towards the EU in the early part of the new millennium was—as in so many other areas of

US foreign policy thereafter—the attacks on New York and Washington on 11 September 2001 (9/11). The immediate impact of 9/11 was to encourage EU member states collectively to support the USA, but it soon became very clear that the EU did not feature largely in US policies, which were undertaken on a predominantly unilateral basis or with key allies (many of them member states of the EU itself). US policy makers, led by Vice-President Cheney and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, simply did not see the use of an organization that depended so heavily on the generation of internal consensus, and which could mobilize almost nothing in the way of 'hard power'; and while the Department of State and Secretary of State Powell were less resistant to the notion of 'civilian power' and multilateral diplomacy, their voices were much less loud and insistent. As a result, the initial stages of the war on terror in Afghanistan and elsewhere were predominantly led and coordinated by the USA and a few close allies. In the words of Donald Rumsfeld, 'the mission determines the coalition, not the coalition the mission', and the EU as a major focus of intense coalition politics was largely out of the game. Things were different, however, when the war on terror touched areas in which the EU had a substantial presence, such as financial sanctions, border security, and post-conflict reconstruction—all key elements in counter-terrorism cooperation; here, the Americans could not do without the EU and had to accept in large measure the complexities of dealing with Brussels (Peterson and Pollack 2003; Rees 2006).

When the Bush administration decided to move against Iraq in 2002–3, it was clear that the EU would not be a major factor in their deliberations. But a number of key long-standing EU member states were, including Britain, Italy, and Spain, as were a number of the eastern European states that were due to join the EU in 2004. For US foreign policy makers, attention focused naturally on those who were either strongly with Washington, or—as in the case of France and to a lesser extent Germany—against it (Gordon and Shapiro 2004; Lindstrom 2003). During 2003–4, US policies were aimed essentially at dividing the EU, and at isolating the French, whose demands for fuller use of the United Nations process grated with the US administration. The fact that the French lined up with the Russians to thwart US aims at crucial points only increased the tension. In this atmosphere, with Rumsfeld encouraging intra-EU frictions with talk of the division between 'old' and 'new' Europe, it was easy to draw a stark contrast between US unilateralism and EU multilateralism, and between the US role as a 'warrior' state and the EU's qualities as a 'trading state' and 'civilian power' (Smith 2004).

The argument earlier in this chapter should warn us against making sweeping and stark distinctions, though. Alongside the open conflicts of 2003–4, a great deal of US–EU cooperation persisted, disputes were managed, and the transatlantic networks in economic and social affairs were maintained. The definite change of style that the George W. Bush administration had brought to the relationship softened during 2005 and 2006, as a 'new multilateralism' seemed to spread in transatlantic relations (Andrews 2005; Zaborowski 2006). By 2007, the Americans even seemed to be warming to the EU's position on global environmental change, and to be more ready for compromise on a number of key trade and commercial issues. For US foreign policy, a number of questions remained open: how would the USA relate to the European Security and Defence Policy in 'normal' times rather than in the heat of war against Iraq? Could the political partnership between the USA and the EU be restored on the basis of mutual respect and awareness of each other's distinctive priorities and internal constraints? Could American policy makers accommodate the nature of the EU's 'normative power' with its focus on human rights and conflict prevention, as opposed to the US focus on hard power and pre-emption? Could the USA and the EU operate as 'partners in leadership' to address some of the most pressing questions in the global political economy, such as those linking environment and development?

These questions lead inexorably into an examination of the Obama presidency and its relationship with the EU. From 2007 onwards, the Europeans were preoccupied with two major sources of change or potential change in US–EU relations. On the one hand, they were waiting for the successor to George W. Bush, and as the presidential campaign proceeded, effectively waiting for Barack Obama. Not only the leaderships of most EU member states, but also their publics, saw Obama as a president who would be much more sensitive to the needs of Europeans, and more responsive to calls for multilateralism and coordination in challenging policy areas (de Vasconcelos and Zaborowski 2009). At the same time, the debate over the future of the EU itself was a key focus of political concern. The constitutional treaty put forward in 2006 was eventually rejected by referenda in the Netherlands and France, whereupon it was reborn in 2007

as the Reform Treaty (usually known as the Lisbon Treaty). After this treaty was in turn rejected in an Irish referendum, it was further amended and eventually entered into force in late 2009. The treaty provided for new foreign policy powers for the EU, and specifically for the strengthening of the role of the EU's High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, who would be supported by a 'diplomatic service' (the European External Action Service) composed of elements drawn from the European Commission, the Council of Ministers, and national diplomatic services (Duke 2009). It also provided for a semi-permanent president of the European Council, explicitly on the grounds that this person would have a role in representing the Union abroad (Joint Study 2010).

In the context of this chapter, the intimate details of the new EU foreign policy apparatus are less relevant than the interaction between a new US president and the 'new' EU. In this respect, the Obama presidency posed four challenges for the EU. First, the new presidency expected more of its international partners: whereas the George W. Bush administrations, until late in their course, had cultivated partnerships only where and when they were seen as unavoidable, the Obama administration offered the prospect of multilateralism but on condition that others played a full part in its pursuit. Second, and relatedly, the Obama administration practised a form of pragmatic realism that was designed to be adaptable to new challenges and opportunities, rather than to long-standing partnerships. Third, the administration confronted and responded to a changing constellation of global power, in which the EU was notably less salient or potentially challenging than China and other 'emerging powers'. Finally, the imperative demands in the USA of domestic economic and financial reconstruction in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis would inevitably form a key shaping force in US foreign policy, and thus in policies towards the EU (Smith 2011).

This set of converging forces posed a challenge for the EU that was arguably as great as that posed by the George W. Bush administrations, though less confrontational in style. Obama himself had visited Europe during his presidential campaign and made a much-heralded speech in Berlin during August 2008. But on the assumption of power, the administration's attention was inexorably dragged towards existing commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan, and towards the combined challenges posed by China and other rising powers and the domestic imperatives of the financial crisis. Thus, while a number of EU leaders cherished hopes for a 'new transatlantic bargain' at the beginning of the Obama administration, these were soon lost in a complex web of issues to do with European contributions to the Afghanistan war, the emergence of the G20 as a key channel for responses to the financial crisis (a channel in which the EU's influence was arguably diluted), and the need for the Americans to pay attention to a wide range of new challenges. Tellingly, in late 2009, the White House cancelled plans for an EU–US summit in the spring of 2010 on the grounds that there was no significant agenda. Although the summit was eventually held in late 2010, in the context of Obama's visit to NATO and other European organizations, and the administration went to some lengths to identify the EU as an essential partner in its pursuit of cooperative solutions to global issues (see Key quotes 13.2), this was not the resounding endorsement of the EU's status that some had expected. Given that 2010 had seen extensive internal wrangling over the introduction of the EU's new foreign policy apparatus, which was only beginning to be resolved by the end of the year, it seemed clear that a combination of US preoccupation with events elsewhere and EU preoccupation with its own internal workings had at least postponed the 'new transatlantic bargain' that some had hoped for.

From the beginning of 2011, a series of new challenges faced US foreign policy, and in many cases they created new uncertainties in US–EU relations. The coincidence of the 'Arab Spring', new tensions in eastern Europe eventually leading to Russian annexation of the Crimea and then conflict in eastern Ukraine, and the renewed push for agreement on the future of Iran's nuclear programme, generated major repercussions in the EU, given that both the 'Arab Spring' and the Ukraine crisis were within what is known as the EU's 'neighbourhood', while the Iranian issue gave a key role to the EU diplomatic machine created by the Lisbon Treaty. As events unfolded, the EU's limitations were sharply displayed: the use of force in Arab countries and in Ukraine escalated beyond the capacity of the Union to intervene, athough Brussels could impose diplomatic and economic sanctions alongside those put in place by the US (despite the reservations of some EU member states when it came to imposing sanctions on Russia). Only in the Iranian case could EU diplomacy display continuity and some effectiveness, although in the diplomatic end-game during 2015, US power played a key role in achieving an agreement.

KEY QUOTES 13.2: US POLICY MAKERS AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AFTER THE COLD WAR

James Baker's Berlin speech in December 1989

Working together, it is up to us to design and generally to put into place what I refer to as a new architecture for this new era … The future development of the European Community will also play a central role in shaping the new Europe … As Europe moves toward its goal of a common internal market, and as its institutions for political and security cooperation evolve, the link between the United States and the European Community will become even more important. We want our transatlantic cooperation to keep pace with European integration and with institutional reform. To this end, we propose that the United States and the European Community work together to achieve, whether it is in treaty or some other form, a significantly strengthened set of institutional and consultative links … We propose that our discussions about this idea proceed in parallel with Europe's efforts to achieve by 1992 a common internal market … The United States also encourages the European Community to continue to expand cooperation with the nations of the east. The promotion of political and economic reform in the east is a natural vocation for the European Community … We see no conflict between the process of European integration and an expansion of cooperation between the European Community and its neighbors to the east and west. Indeed, we believe that the attraction of the European Community for the countries of the east depends most on its continued vitality. And the vitality of the Economic Community depends in turn on its continued commitment to the goal of a united Europe envisaged by its founders—free, democratic and closely linked to its North American partners.

(Baker 1989; James Baker was US secretary of state)

Madeleine Albright's warning to the EU on the 'three Ds' in 1998

Our … task is working together to develop a European Security and Defense Identity, or ESDI, within the Alliance [NATO], which the United States has strongly endorsed. We enthusiastically support any measures that enhance European capabilities. The United States welcomes a more capable European partner, with modern, flexible military forces capable of putting out fires in Europe's own backyard and working with us through the Alliance to defend our common interests. The key to a successful initiative is to focus on practical military capabilities. Any initiative must avoid pre-empting Alliance decision-making by de-linking ESDI from NATO, avoid duplicating existing efforts, and avoid discrimination against non-EU members.

(Albright 1998; Madeleine Albright was US secretary of state)

Donald Rumsfeld on 'old' and 'new' Europe in 2003

Q: Sir, a question about the mood among European allies … If you look at, for example, France and Germany … it seems that a lot of Europeans rather give the benefit of the doubt to Saddam Hussein than President George Bush. These are US allies. What do you make of that?

A: What do I say? Well, there isn't anyone alive who wouldn't prefer unanimity. I mean, you just always would like everyone to stand up and say, Way to go! That's the right [thing] to do, United States … Now, you're thinking of Europe as Germany and France. I don't. I think that's old Europe. If you look at the entire NATO Europe today, the center of gravity is shifting to the east. And there are a lot of new members … They're not with France and Germany on this, they're with the United States.

(Rumsfeld 2003; Donald Rumsfeld was US secretary of defense)

The Obama administration and the EU in 2010

The European Union has become a global actor and a critical US partner. The United States strongly supported the Lisbon Treaty because we want the EU to play an increasing role on all of the most important economic and security issues on the transatlantic agenda and beyond. The treaty marked a milestone for Europe and its role in the world and we hope it will guide the further evolution of the European Union toward a more consistent, coherent, and effective foreign policy. The EU represents the collective potential of its twenty-seven member states: among the most prosperous and militarily-capable democracies on the planet. That is why it is an essential partner and why this upcoming summit will be a valuable opportunity for our leaders to meet and to advance our common agenda. This US–EU summit will be the first post-Lisbon US–EU summit and, while the agenda is not yet finalized, we hope to pursue expanded partnership by:

1. promoting the recovery and growth of our economies through addressing regulatory barriers to trade
2. coordinating US and EU resources to meet the development needs of poorer countries, as well as those emerging from crises and disaster
3. identifying ways to enhance our efforts on counter-terrorism and security
4. working together on critical foreign policy issues such as Iran, the Middle East Peace Process, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

(Gordon 2010; Philip H. Gordon was assistant secretary in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, Department of State)

For the US, the challenges took a rather different form. Washington had the power to intervene with force in the Middle East, but the Obama administration proved reluctant to do so; and in eastern Europe, the US placed a heavy emphasis on sanctions while not being willing to intervene more directly. In both cases, Washington expressed frustration at the incapacity of the EU to take decisive action, but American attention was also diverted to other parts of the global arena. The Obama 'pivot' to the Asia-Pacific reflected changing priorities, and focused on areas in which the EU had only a marginal presence beyond trade. The pursuit of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) occupied much of the administration's attention and was seen as a higher priority than the negotiations (from 2013 onwards) for a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the EU. Here, the effects of a broad global power shift were reflected not only in US policy but also in transatlantic dealings more generally (Alcaro et al 2016). Although TTIP went through more than a dozen rounds of negotiation, it was never clear that it could overcome a complex set of obstacles emanating not only from the shifting balance between the US, the EU, and 'rising powers' but also from a cocktail of domestic and transnational opposition forces who saw it as a neo-liberal project to project the interests of major multinational corporations and erode social and environmental protections (Morin et al. 2015).

Trump: challenge or crisis?

Whatever the difficulties encountered in US–EU relations in the second Obama administration, they paled into insignificance beside the impact that the election of Donald Trump was to have on the relationship. As we have shown, the Obama years had not been plain sailing, to be sure. But Obama could at least claim to have remained highly popular in Europe itself. Indeed, according to one Pew survey, in every single European country polled, Obama received much higher ratings at the end of his presidency than Trump did when he finally became president in January 2017. In fact, nearly all polls at the time pointed to a very low level of trust in Trump even before he entered the White House—a quite remarkable achievement given that he had not yet done anything. Indeed, so concerned were European leaders at the prospect of a Trump White House that both the president of the European Council (Donald Tusk) and the president of the European Commission (Jean-Claude Juncker) wrote directly to Trump calling for the earliest meeting possible to seek reassurance from a man whose various statements on the campaign trail during 2016 had left many Europeans deeply rattled.

But why such early concerns? In part it related to Trump himself, especially his populist, and unfortunately all too popular, appeal during the campaign to white Americans targeting Mexico ('They are not our friends, believe me'), Mexican immigrants ('They're bringing drugs. They're bringing drugs.They're rapists'), and of course Muslims—'Donald J. Trump is calling for a complete and total shutdown of Muslims entering the United States' he declared as early as December 2015 (*Washington Post* 2015). But the most immediate problem in the eyes of most Europeans is what Trump had to say about Europe itself. Compared to (say) China, Trump said little per se about Europe. But when he did speak about it, he talked as if it were some failing project whose best days were clearly behind it. There were none of the standard presidential-like references about standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the only other like-minded group of democracies in the world. Nor were matters helped very much when Trump intervened very directly in the UK referendum campaign: in one campaign speech in May 2016 he said the UK would actually be 'better off without' the European Union—clearly going against the official US position. Then a month on, following the Brexit vote, he declared that the British had done a wonderful thing by voting to leave the EU. The UK, he announced, had finally regained its 'independence' and taken back control of its own affairs. A few months later he said very much the same about his own victory in the United States. In fact, he more than implied that not only had his own victory owed something to Brexit, but that what had happened in November was merely another expression of the same revolt against the liberal establishment which had begun back in the UK in June. As he so forcefully put it, his victory was 'Brexit, plus, plus, plus'!

The electoral campaign also sent two other, very worrying, signals back cross the Atlantic. One of these was the result of what Trump had to say about NATO, the security architecture upon which transatlantic relations had rested since 1949. Criticizing the 'Europeans' for not paying enough for their own defence was standard fare in the United States—it was almost routine. What was not routine, however, was announcing during the presidential campaign (in a television interview) that because we were living in a 'different world',

the United States would have to drastically rethink the purpose of an organization which had in his view become much too 'expensive', and may in fact have become redundant or 'obsolete' altogether. Trump even implied that one of the reasons NATO might have become increasingly irrelevant was because it was not involved in fighting terrorism (forgetting to mention that NATO had been deeply engaged in Afghanistan for most of the twenty-first century). Nor could his allies have been much assured by an answer Trump gave to the question about what he would do as president if the Russians invaded the Baltic states. Well, it all depended, he replied. Nothing was guaranteed. It would all depend on our allies and their resolve to pay their bills. The US was obliged to do something for them only when they had 'fulfilled' their financial 'obligations to us'. Only then would the US respond, 'Yes'.

If Trump's ambiguous comments about NATO were one source of grave concern to Europeans, so too were his oft-repeated attacks on the whole free trade order upon which both the world and the transatlantic economies rested. Trump, of course, knew what he was doing. Indeed, by playing the economic nationalist card and attacking free trade and the whole architecture supporting it, he swung a number of key states in the north behind him and so won the election in November. But the impact of his words outside the United States was little short of disastrous. Previous candidates for the White House had always found it electorally useful to criticize the consequences of 'unfair' trade with, say, China or even Mexico. But nobody before Trump had appeared to reject globalization in its entirety. Nor had they railed quite so vociferously against all multilateral trade deals—including by inference the all-important Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) which would one day—it was hoped—form the cornerstone of the transatlantic economic relationship. But Trump appeared to mean what he said and would not back down. The world, in effect, was being put on economic notice; the EU too. A new economic order—less liberal, more protectionist—loomed, potentially threatening globalization in general and the foundations of the post-war 'transatlantic bargain' in particular.

Many must have assumed, and a few no doubt hoped, that having gained the White House, Trump would quickly moderate his talk about NATO being a has-been organization or the EU being an anachronism; and to some degree he did. In early 2017, for instance, he confessed that perhaps NATO might not be quite so obsolete as he had originally said; and that the EU might still be a partner of sorts. He even made a number of visits across the Atlantic during his first few months in office. In May, he visited NATO headquarters in Brussels. Over the summer of 2017 he separately visited Poland and France. He also attended two 'G' meetings, a G-7 meeting in Italy in May 2017, and then a G-20 meeting in Germany in July 2017. Diplomatically, at least, it seemed as if Trump was taking Europe seriously.

Yet none of these various trips did a great deal to reassure the majority of European leaders. Indeed, nearly everything Trump did or said when in Europe only made Europeans feel less reassured. Thus in his speech in Poland, though he did mention the importance of NATO, he went on to talk in a way designed to flatter his right-wing hosts that he would be out front alongside them defending Western civilization from those now attacking our 'culture, faith, and tradition'. At the earlier NATO meeting, Trump won fewer friends still when he admonished his European allies—yet again—first for spending too little on defence (standard fare) but also for being unwise and foolhardy enough to let in so many refugees. To add to the diplomatic embarrassment, he also managed to forget to publicly endorse the all-important Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty (an attack on one being an attack on all) upon which the whole NATO alliance rested. As seasoned US diplomat Nick Burns tweeted diplomatically, 'I do think Trump's visit to #NATO was the least effective of any American President since 1949' (Burns 2017). Russia and Putin also cast their shadow over proceedings. Neither were on the formal agenda, but as Trump was facing a series of investigations about the degree of Russian involvement in his own campaign, the issue was unlikely to go away completely. Indeed, when his chief economic adviser, Gary Cohn, hinted that Trump might be reconsidering economic sanctions against Russia, or perhaps that he did not even have a view on sanctions, this only seemed to suggest to those already worried about Trump's well-known views on Putin—'you have to give him credit for what he's doing for Russia' (12 April 2014)—that Trump still had not given up entirely on making some kind of deal with Moscow. Moreover, when it was disclosed that at the later G-20 meeting he had spoken with Putin at a dinner—using a Russian interpreter—this was viewed by some as being rather 'unusual' (the charitable interpretation) and by others as suggesting that Trump was still trying to move beyond the agreed

NATO and EU position of keeping up the economic pressure on Moscow for annexing Crimea and waging a proxy war against Ukraine.

Meanwhile, Trump's relations with Germany only seemed to go from bad to worse. German public opinion had greeted Trump's original election with a sense of almost total disbelief. Things did not improve thereafter. His poll ratings in Germany continued to slide, while Angela Merkel, the German chancellor, hinted obliquely, but clearly enough, that it was not just interests which held the Western alliance together but sound values too—the very obvious suggestion here being that Trump simply did not have the right set of values. By May 2017, Merkel was even hinting that the US had by now become an unreliable partner and that Europeans and Germans would now have to start thinking and doing things for themselves. Never one to let a challenge to go unanswered, Trump responded in turn by threatening Germany economically. America, he pointed out, had 'a massive trade deficit with Germany' and perhaps this would now have to 'change'. Nor did matters improve thereafter. Indeed, so bad did the relationship become that Trump himself was a key issue in the German elections, with Merkel's political rivals on the left discovering that even if they could not match her for personal popularity, they could win over voters by 'bashing' Trump. The ever-present spectre of anti-Americanism in German poltics was now looming larger than ever.

But perhaps nothing was more likely to inflame the relationship than the issue of climate change. Trump at first looked to be open to persuasion. In fact, both the British prime minister, Theresa May, and the new French president, Emmanuael Macron, tried hard to persuade Trump to remain within the existing agreement signed in Paris in 2015. But all to no avail: in a well-rehearsed speech given on the lawn of the White House in June 2017, Trump announced that the United States would (as threatened) be withdrawing from the Paris climate change agreement. To be fair, he had always said he would. He had never been ambiguous about the agreement. In fact, he almost seemed to hate it, arguing, in a very Trump way, that it was not only a waste of US taxpayer's money but would destroy jobs too. As he made clear in his speech, getting out from under the agreement—this 'self-inflicted major economic wound'—made perfect economic sense. Indeed, if it had gone ahead, it would—he asserted—have cost '$3 trillion in economic activity at home and somewhat close to 6.5 million industrial and manufacturing jobs'. And this was far too high a price for a president who had been elected only a few months earlier and whose stated aim was to reboot the US economy, not entangle it in all sorts of unnecessary regulations which would only work to America's disadvantage and to the benefit of its competitors in Asia. Trump did hint, of course, that America might rejoin the agreement on more favourable terms once the agreement had been revised. Few took the hint seriously—least of all those in the EU and in most European capitals, who attacked the Trump decision almost with a single voice. But there was no moving Trump. He had been elected, as he so delicately put it, to defend the interests of the people of Pittsburgh, not Paris. The message to Europeans and the EU could have not have been clearer: an agreement which had taken many months of intense negotiation to bring to a successful conclusion in 2015 meant little or nothing to the man now sitting in the White House. He would—as he had said he would—always defend America's economic interests, and if this meant jettisoning a part of the infrastructure supporting the transatlantic relationship, then so much the worse for the relationship. America would always come first.

Finally, trade and investment have been in many ways just as important as NATO in holding the transatlantic relationship togther. Indeed, for both the EU and the United States, it has remained the most important global economic relationship of all, accounting for millions of jobs and a huge amount of transatlantic investment. The stakes could not have been higher. Initially, things did not go especially well; many at first worried that having thrown out another trade deal (the TPP) Trump would jettison TTIP as well. But this did not happen, and having weathered some initial disagreements, by July 2017 the US commerce secretary Wilbur Ross was telling a Berlin audience that the US remained open to a free trade pact with the EU. He could not have been more candid. 'I stand before you tonight to say this in a more explicit fashion: we, as major trading partners of each other, should have a free trade agreement.' Of course, this did not guarantee passage for TTIP, which faced at least as much opposition in Germany as in the United States. Trump, moreover, was still keen to reduce those trade deficits with Germany. Yet the shift in position was clear. What had been said during the campaign back in 2016 was at last coming face-to-face with the simple economic fact that the US needed the EU economically every bit as much as the EU needed the US.

Trends and tensions

Moving now beyond Trump, what can we say in more general terms about the changing nature of the US–EU relationship and its place in US foreign policy since the end of the Cold War? A number of observations are in order by way of a conclusion.

One is that US policy makers have found it very difficult in the period since 1990 to generate settled images either of European integration or of the USA's own role in that process. At one end of the spectrum, US leaders have feared being excluded from the 'new Europe' as a result of decreased threat from the east and the declining need for US military involvement. As a result, there has been a desire to maintain both presence and leverage in the security affairs of Europe, and to resist the apparent threat of exclusion. At the same time, however, the progress of European integration has actually increased the American stake in Europe in the economic and political domains. The Single Market programme and its successors have stimulated ever greater US foreign direct investment (matched, it must be noted, by major increases in investment by EU companies in the USA). The image of the EU held by major US corporations has often been at odds with that of the US administration, and in many ways this is not surprising. The challenge posed by the Trump administration from 2017 onwards would constitute a major test of this long-term pattern.

Until 2017, perhaps the greatest challenge to establishing US images of European integration, and to clarifying the US's own role in relation to it, came from the ambiguities attending the increasing international assertiveness of the EU itself. In a growing number of policy domains, especially those of the 'new agenda' such as the environment or human rights, the EU asserted its right to be heard and to take a leadership role. This exertion of 'soft power' and a form of 'EU exceptionalism' was accompanied by persistent EU failings in the area of 'hard power' and military security—failings given added prominence in American eyes by the lack of collective support from EU member states over Iraq and in certain parts of the 'war on terror', and then later by EU shortcomings in the Arab Spring and in the conflict over Ukraine.

This issue of power in the early 2000s came to be seen in terms of two key interrelated images, largely but not entirely propounded by US policy makers or their close advisers. The first was the 'Mars/Venus' debate, in which European unwillingness to resort to or collectively deploy 'hard power' was seen as part of a fundamental cultural disconnect between the USA and Europe (Kagan 2003; Lindberg 2005). The second was the 'unilateral/multilateral' debate, through which the Europeans' commitment to multilateral institutions and rules of conduct in the international arena was contrasted to US unilateralism and willingness to take hard national decisions (Pollack 2003). In terms of US policy, it can readily be seen that these two areas of imagery expressed American ambivalence and uncertainty about the status and future of their EU partnership, and to this extent they expressed starkly certain ideas that have been around in US–EC and US–EU relations for decades. The post–Cold War period may have highlighted and focused them, but it did not entirely create them (see Box 13.2). The Trump administration gave them a powerful new twist, with results that were difficult to predict as of early 2017.

BOX 13.2: TRENDS AND TENSIONS IN US–EU RELATIONS, 1989–2017

- *Images and reality*: difficulty of generating settled images of European integration; fears of exclusion, desire to retain leverage; increasing assertiveness of the EU; debates over nature of EU and US power and over unilateralism/multilateralism. Broad but challenging support of EU, until election of Trump in 2016.
- *Politics, economics, and security*: intensification of linkages, assisted by collapse of Soviet bloc and processes of globalization; pressures on new dimensions of security, including 'societal security'; need for complex policy mix to match growing scope of EU. New 'domesticism' and challenges to linkages introduced by the Trump administration.
- *Empire, alliance, and interdependence*: US as 'only superpower'—liberal imperialism; growing continental power of the EU; links to issues of European and world order; pressures on alliance from changes in EU, US, and world arena; new challenges of global governance created by globalization and interdependence; 'securitization' and institutionalization of many international issues, with implications for exercise of power in US–EU relations. New unilateralism of US policy and assertion of American power after 2016 election.

A similar case can be made in relation to the second set of trends and tensions: those between political, economic, and security dimensions of the US–EU relationship. There is no doubt that the post–Cold War period both intensified and reshaped these forces, but the question is, how and with what effects? As we have seen, the breakdown of the Soviet bloc and of the Soviet Union itself was not merely a political event; it had profound implications for economic and security processes, and it brought the need for 'comprehensive security' alongside that for purely military security. These trends were reinforced (though not created) by the events of 9/11 and by the war on terror. As noted above, one consequence for US policy makers was that they found themselves having to deal more and more with the EU on matters of economic and financial sanctions, on questions of counter-terrorism, and on problems of what has been termed 'societal security', involving social and environmental standards (Pollack and Peterson 2003). This was a challenge both for the institutional structure of US foreign policy and for the substance of policy itself. At the level of institutions, the EU posed the challenge of working across departmental boundaries and of coordinating policies at the transnational or the supranational level—a challenge to which not all US government departments were fully responsive, and which caused frictions within and between parts of the foreign policy community. At the level of policy substance, the EU demands close control of what is being said and done by US officials at the national level and at the EU level within Europe, and a strong capacity to undertake multidimensional negotiations with a variety of partners. This has not come easily to US policy makers even where they have wanted to pursue this kind of policy approach; others have rejected this policy style in favour of strong action by the USA and certain favoured allies, but it is not clear that this has been successful in anything but the short term. Once again, the installation of the Trump administration in 2017 gave a new twist and new focus to such issues.

Finally, what can we say about the balance in US policies towards European integration between the underlying structures of 'empire', 'alliance', and 'interdependence' since the end of the Cold War? Discussion of the ways in which US foreign policy after 1990 expressed a kind of liberal imperialism is of course much more broadly based than in US–EU relations alone (see many other chapters in this book), but the rise of the EU has had its own distinctive impact. Indeed, there is some ground for the argument that the new continental scale of the EU has created or expressed a form of 'EU imperialism' based on its structural power within the continent and on its dominance of what the European Commission calls the 'new neighbourhood' (Zielonka 2006; Smith 2007). American policy makers have found this difficult to pin down or to deal with, because it is based on a form of 'civilian power' that is at least at odds with, if not alien to, US thinking about world order, and this difficulty has been compounded in some ways by uncertainty about the EU's foreign policy and diplomatic capacity following the Lisbon Treaty reforms. While Washington was able to continue its overall support for the stabilizing role and the economic benefits of EU enlargement, it has found itself at odds with the Europeans over how far this can be pushed. The most obvious example was that of Turkey, which American policy makers wanted to see as a member state of the EU but to which both the EU's enlargement processes and some existing EU member states were resistant. The EU was also resistant to US pressure to deal more forcefully with the Russia of Vladimir Putin as it became more assertive within and outside Europe, and acted in part as a competitor with the US in dealings with other emerging powers such as China, India, and Brazil. Alongside these primarily political contradictions, the EU has gained strength through the consolidation of the Eurozone and of the euro as an international currency. But the example of the euro (to which by 2017 only nineteen of twenty-eight member states belonged, and the status of which had been placed in question by the continuing impact of the financial crisis) does still point to the lack of a fully collective EU policy in many areas—a feature that can be and has been exploited by American policy makers. The election of Donald Trump, an admirer of Putin and a determined 'America Firster' in both political and economic terms, placed a huge question-mark against the EU's status as a partner or rival for the US.

The jury is thus still out on the persistence of 'empire' or hegemony in US–EU relations. Equally, the 'alliance' dimension must be seen as still valid but still inconclusive. At times in the post–Cold War period, US–EU relations appeared as a form of 'adversarial partnership', with structural constraints preventing a divorce but plenty of disputes and tensions within the transatlantic 'family'. The formal institutional commitments of the New Transatlantic Agenda were not legally binding, but they did form a powerful set of

shaping factors in all but the hardest of 'hard security' areas; TTIP was seen by some as a means of formalizing such commitments, but has not come to fruition. The development of the European Security and Defence Policy also provided a new channel for communication on matters of military security, although this is often still mediated through NATO, using the 'Berlin plus' arrangements for coordination of resources and planning (Howorth 2005, 2007). Yet there has been no common perception of a transatlantic 'grand strategy' either for the global political economy or for the areas of 'hard security' that proved so troublesome in the early years of the new millennium (Sloan 2005). What has emerged is a form of institutional pluralism in which mechanisms to adjust and deal with differences have grown up over the post–Cold War period, rather than a new 'transatlantic bargain' covering all areas of US–EU interaction. From a US foreign policy perspective, and from the point of view of Washington preoccupied with the rise of China, India, and other emerging regional or global powers, this may have been the best that could be hoped for.

But where should we situate Trump in all this? It is difficult to say with any great certainty, and what might be true today may turn out to be untrue or misleading in a few months' time when he (once more) changes his mind! But on one thing we can be clear: Trump the candidate was like no other candiadate in recent US history; and while he may not be the first post–Cold War president to have upset Europeans, he has done so in almost spectacular fashion. Yet as New York governor Mario Cuomo repeatedly said, 'You campaign in poetry. You govern in prose.' In the end, Trump may have to come to terms with the simple fact that the EU and NATO are just too important to be cast aside or treated with indifference. He may have talked the anti-European and anti-NATO talk, but he may come to discover what all American presidents have invariably discovered in the past: that in a dangerous world, it is far better to have rich allies and democratic partners by your side, than not. Some difficult days may lie ahead in the transatlantic relationship. Still, given where the relationship looked to be heading when Trump entered the White House, there remains room for hope. The relationship may have been damaged along the way, and opinion about Trump remains extraordinarily low in Europe at the time of writing. Yet if the history of this partnership points to anything, it is to its remarkable ability to survive crises that many at the time felt would be fatal and presidents whose legitimacy in Europe would always be in doubt.

The forces of 'empire' and 'alliance' are thus still intermingled in US policies towards the EU. The same can be said for 'interdependence', the third of our underlying factors (see Box 13.2). The intensification of globalization, and the consistent growth of transactions between the USA and the EU, have been persistent shaping factors since the 1960s. But since the end of the Cold War there has been a growing tension between the various approaches to the management of these issues. The EU represents the most highly developed form of regional interdependence—in fact, it goes beyond interdependence because of its dense institutionalization and the legal structures that sustain it, especially in economic activities. For US policy makers, this makes the EU a key partner in the management of interdependence not only in the North Atlantic area but also at the global level. US–EU competition and convergence strongly shape such bodies as the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, not to mention a vast range of more specialized organizations within the global political economy (McGuire and Smith 2008). They also increasingly influence what goes on in a wide variety of newly 'securitized' organizations dealing with migration, asylum, transport, and other areas that are central in facing the challenge of terrorism. US policy makers have therefore had to adapt to dealing not with a number of independent interlocutors in Europe, but with governments and other groups who are themselves constrained by membership of the EU. US foreign policy has thus faced conflicting pressures in dealing with the growth of interdependence between the USA and the EU—on the one hand a pressure to act unilaterally and make others adjust to US preferences, and on the other hand a realization that in the EU this is not as easy as it might appear and that multilateral methods might be more effective. It would be too much to claim that dealing with the EU has changed the culture of US foreign policy, but there can be no doubt that the development of the EU since 1990 has provided a concentrated form of the interdependence to which all US foreign policies have had to adjust since the 1960s. Whether this situation will withstand the ostentatious rejection of 'interdependence' and global governance by the Trump administration is one of many unanswered questions relating to the post-2016 period in US–EU relations.

KEY POINTS

- The end of the Cold War had a major impact on US views of European integration, but this has to be seen alongside other and more long-lasting factors in shaping US policies.
- US policy makers engaged in a redefinition of their views of European integration during the 1990s, especially in light of the change from EC to EU, but this was subject to a series of uncertainties and contradictions.
- Tensions between the USA and the EU over matters of European order (conflict in former Yugoslavia, enlargement) were a key feature of the 1990s.
- The EU also posed a broader challenge to US policy in the global political economy (through the Single Market and monetary union), and in matters of security and defence (through the European Security and Defence Policy from the end of the 1990s).
- Although there was a growth of new 'partnership' institutions between the USA and the EU, these did not eliminate tensions—rather, they assisted with their management.
- The impact of 9/11 was substantial, but did not change everything in US–EU relations. Rather, it meant that existing issues were cast in a new light and given additional point. Longer-term processes such as globalization and new types of conflict were crystallized in 9/11 and by involvement in Iraq, and later by changes in the nature of terrorism and conflicts in the Middle East and eastern Europe.
- By the time of the Obama administrations, the tensions in US–EU relations caused by US policy makers' redefinition of their images, by linkages between political, economic, and security issues, and by underlying trends towards 'empire', 'alliance', and 'interdependence', were still apparent, but in radically changed conditions.
- The long-term impact of the election of Donald Trump as president in November 2016 is uncertain, but Trump's views posed an immediate challenge to the EU in all spheres of policy.

Conclusion

As noted in the Introduction, this chapter has explored one of the key relationships in which the USA has been involved since the end of the Second World War: the transatlantic relationship with the 'European integration project'. This is a relationship not with a single state, but with a densely institutionalized region, which has itself grown and become markedly more prominent in the world arena over the past half-century. American foreign policy makers have generally been consistent in their support for the integration project, but the project has challenged US foreign policy in a number of important areas. The focus of the chapter has thus been on the ways in which US policy makers have developed images of the EC and now the EU, on the challenges posed by European integration for US policy processes and the uses of US power, and on the ways in which these challenges have been met in the very different conditions of the Cold War and post–Cold War periods (see Major debates and their impacts 13.1).

The chapter has shown that US foreign policy makers have consistently placed European integration at the core of their policies, but that this has not prevented persistent tensions, many of which express issues about the nature of US foreign policy itself and the US role in the world arena. We have seen that US policy makers have needed to develop an image of European integration, but that this has been made difficult by the nature of the integration process itself, by the 'stickiness' of US assumptions about the status and the role of the EC and then the EU, and by changes in the broader world arena, specifically those surrounding the end of the Cold War and the rise of globalization. We have also seen that US policy towards European integration has reflected the complex interaction of political, economic, and security forces, and that the shifting balance between these three elements has made US policy formation problematic. Finally, we have seen that underlying tendencies in US foreign policy, towards 'empire', 'alliance', and 'interdependence', have coexisted more or less easily in dealing with European integration, and that while conflicts between the three elements have been especially clear during the first years of the new millennium this is not the first time that such conflicts have been seen. Such is the nature of US–EU relations that one can safely say it will not be the last.

During the course of relations between US foreign policy and European integration, many have tried to identify key potential future trends (see Controversies 13.1). Over the years, the options that have been discerned can be broadly categorized into three schools of thought: convergence, and the development of a

MAJOR DEBATES AND THEIR IMPACTS 13.1: US POLICIES TOWARDS EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

The 'Mars/Venus' debate of the early 2000s

The controversies centring around US and EU responses to the war on terror and the war in Iraq during 2002–4 generated debate not only in policy circles but also in academic analysis. One of the key figures in this debate was the American policy analyst Robert Kagan, who in 2003 published his book *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*. Kagan's argument was that there was a deep difference between the United States and Europe in their respective interpretation and uses of power, and that this reflected long historical experience as well as current events. To put it simply, the United States had evolved with a strong orientation towards the use of 'hard' military power and a strong position both on sovereignty and national security, as the result of its geopolitical location, its industrial and technological development, and the growth of an official culture in which military force was a central means of implementing foreign policy. On the other side, Europe—best represented by the 'civilian power' promoted by the EU—had grown to focus on the use of 'soft power' and the building of institutions for the solving of international problems. This too reflected the relevant historical and cultural experiences: the disastrous history of the use of force in Europe up to 1945, and the conclusion drawn by ruling elites that military force was to be constrained and subjected to rigorous rules. But according to Kagan, this circumstance also effectively reflected the weakness of Europe, since if the EU or individual European countries had been able to match the USA in military terms, they would not have had to adopt this rationalization of their own inadequacies. This debate was of course centred on the war in Iraq, and it also adopted a sweeping view of both US and European positions—but how much can it be seen as reflecting a permanent underlying set of differences?

new and more integrated 'transatlantic bargain'; divergence, and the growth of tensions and contradictions; and drift, implying the growth of indifference and unevenness. The analysis in this chapter suggests, not surprisingly, that the future is likely to be a combination of all three of these tendencies, reflecting not only the nature of US–EU relations but also the turbulence of a changing global order.

CONTROVERSIES 13.1: HOW HAS THE US RESPONDED TO EUROPEAN INTEGRATION?

The US response to the development of European integration: partnership, leadership, or hegemony?

This has been a continuous thread in the development of US–EU relations. US policy makers have found themselves constantly trying to balance their expectations about European dependence and the USA's right to exert its predominance against those that reflect the desire of Europeans to assert themselves—and of course, the Europeans can only really assert themselves against the USA, their 'most significant other'. This controversy also links to the key questions about the nature of power and its exercise that we have encountered at many points in the chapter.

The US response to the development of European integration: adaptation or the pursuit of new dominance?

As the Europeans began to develop their own 'identity' and to strengthen their institutions during the 1980s, this meant that the Americans were forced to adjust. But this was quite a difficult process because of the 'stickiness' both of images and of institutional cultures in the USA. As a result, during the late 1980s and the 1990s, US policies towards European integration went through a series of partial adjustments, with no overarching grand strategy. This was also affected by the range of global challenges in which US foreign policy became embroiled, which in many cases deflected their attention from the EU. The George W. Bush administrations of the new millennium attempted to assert a new US predominance, but while this was possible in dealing with issues of 'hard power' and security, it was less possible in the context of economic, cultural, and humanitarian issues. The Obama administration adopted a more pragmatic and realist position, which promised enhanced cooperation but at times threatened to marginalize the EU, while the Trump administration challenged the very notion of partnership and cooperation with its emphasis on 'America First' policy priorities.

The US response to the European Union: cooperation, containment, or confrontation?

This is really a continuation of the 'controversies' above. The USA has pronounced its support for European integration from the start, and for the EU since it was established in the early 1990s. But many of the actions taken by US policy makers have accompanied that general support with a desire to contain the specific harm that a growing EU might do to US interests. Economically, this has meant vigorous use of the World Trade Organization to raise complaints against the EU; politically, it has meant the desire by many US leaders to contain the development of a 'European foreign policy', and to put the EU in a subordinate position; and in security affairs, it has led to considerable ambivalence about the development of a European Security and Defence Policy. Often, this ambivalence in US policies has led Washington to try and exploit 'special relationships' with EU member states such as the UK, and to pursue a kind of 'divide and rule' strategy either explicitly or implicitly. The Trump administration seemed to promise a turbo-charged version of 'divide and rule' tactics in relation to the EU, and openly suggested that US policy should aim at the dissolution of the Union.

The USA, the EU, and the management of international challenges: unilateralism versus multilateralism?

One of the key contrasts that has been noted between the USA and the EU since the early 1990s has been the alleged preference of US policy makers for unilateral solutions, and thus the contrast with the EU's search for multilateral solutions through a range of international organizations. In the aftermath of 9/11, and especially in the build-up to war in Iraq, this seemed an important distinction to draw; but the question is, how much of this contrast is permanent, and how much is it the product of particular circumstances? Do the EU and the USA really inhabit different 'worlds' of international relations, or are they more alike than they are often presented as being? Certainly, in the economic field, the EU has armed itself with the same range of weapons as the USA, and shows a tendency towards unilateral actions where its 'targets' are relatively weak; the USA, on the other hand, has stuck with multilateral rules for the most part, even where they threaten its short-term interests. Kagan (see Major debates and their impacts 13.1) would certainly argue that the EU's apparent promotion of multilateral solutions to political and security problems is a rationalization of its own weakness (although he would also argue that the USA's preference for unilateralism is a reflection of perceived power). Events such as 9/11, the Iraq War, and the conflicts of 2011 and beyond can be seen as those most likely to underline the differences, although it must not be forgotten that the response to terrorism covers a wide range of activities in which the EU has major strengths, such as international financial and judicial cooperation. The response to terrorism might thus show the EU's strength as well as its weaknesses, and could be more challenging to US policy makers than apparently simple issues of military force. The unilateralism of the Trump administration promised a major test of the EU's commitment to multilateralism, and to notions of global governance in general.

QUESTIONS

1. What motivated US support for the early stage of European integration?
2. What is the importance of John F. Kennedy's 1962 speech on Atlantic partnership?
3. Why were US–EC relations especially difficult in the early 1970s?
4. What was the impact of the 'new Cold War' during the early 1980s on US policies towards European integration?
5. What impact has the enlargement of the EU had on US perceptions of the European integration process?
6. Why did American foreign policy makers initially feel that the war in former Yugoslavia was a matter for the EU, and why did they have to change their minds?
7. What effect did the changing agenda of global economic and social issues have on US policies towards the EU in the late 1990s, and why?
8. Has the challenge of terrorism strengthened or weakened US support for European integration?
9. Why was the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) seen as a potential means of reinvigorating the US–EU relationship more generally?
10. What were the implications of the election of Donald Trump in 2016 for the future of US–EU relations?

FURTHER READING

There is a vast range of literature on the transatlantic relationship, both from an American and from a European standpoint. The following deal especially with the issues raised in this chapter.

Alcaro, R., Peterson, J., and Greco, E. (eds) (2016), *The West and the Global Power Shift: Transatlantic Relations and Global Governance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

A major collection dealing with the US and EU responses to changes in the global system.

Andrews, D. (ed.) (2005), *The Atlantic Alliance under Stress: US–European Relations after Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

A strong collection of contributions from Americans and Europeans.

Bujajski, J. and Teleki, I. (2007), *Atlantic Bridges: America's New European Allies* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield).

Deals with the ways in which the new or newly liberated countries of central and eastern Europe relate both to the EU and to the USA.

Heller, F. and Gillingham, J. (eds) (1996), *The United States and the Integration of Europe: Legacies of the Postwar Era* (New York: St Martin's Press).

Strong collection on the foundations of US policy towards the European integration project between 1945 and 1960.

Hocking, B. and Smith, M. (1997), *Beyond Foreign Economic Policy: The United States, the Single European Market and the Changing World Economy* (London: Cassell Pinter).

Explores American responses to the new challenge of the Single Market, and places this in the context of broader global trends.

McGuire, S. and Smith, M. (2008), *The European Union and the United States: Competition and Convergence in the Global Arena* (Basingstoke: Palgrave/Macmillan).

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14

US foreign policy in Russia

Peter Rutland

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Introduction

The end of the Cold War lifted the threat of nuclear annihilation and transformed the international security landscape. However, that historic shift also involved the collapse of the Soviet Union and its fragmentation into fifteen newly-independent states. The Russian Federation, which inherited half the population and 70 per cent of the territory of the former Soviet Union, was an unknown quantity. Would it become a friend and partner of the United States, a full and equal member of the community of democratic nations? Or would it slip back into a hostile, expansionary communist or nationalist power?

KEY QUOTES 14.1: AFTER THE COLD WAR

By the grace of God, America won the Cold War.

(President George W. Bush State of the Union address, 22 January 1992)

The United States has found it exceedingly difficult to define its 'national interest' in the absence of Soviet power.

(Condoleezza Rice, writing in 2000, shortly before she became US national security adviser)

What would happen to the Soviet arsenal: its 27,000 nuclear warheads, and stocks of chemical and biological weapons? What would Moscow do to defend the interests of the 25 million ethnic Russians who were now living outside the boundaries of the Russian state? Would Russia follow the example of Slobodan Milošović, who was fighting to carve a 'Greater Serbia' out of the former Yugoslavia?

There was no obvious answer to such questions in the early 1990s. And even twenty-five years after the Soviet collapse, US policy makers are still unsure whether Russia can become a stable and predictable partner in the community of nations.

US–Russian relations have gone through several phases since 1991. Initially, the rivalry and mutual fear of the Cold War was replaced by a feeling of giddy co-operation, but that eroded in the course of the 1990s as the democratic transition and market reforms in Russia stalled. There was growing uncertainty about Russia's intentions, following Russia's hostile reaction to the US-led war over Kosovo in 1999 and the accession to power of Vladimir Putin at the end of that year. The terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 led to new hope that a strategic alliance could be forged between Moscow and Washington. But visions of partnership were dashed by Russia's opposition to the March 2003 invasion of Iraq and Russia's slide into authoritarianism, signalled by the arrest of oil magnate Mikhail Khodorkovsky in October 2003. Vladimir Putin was convinced that the 'colour revolutions' that toppled pro-Russian, authoritarian leaders in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan from 2003 to 2005 were part of a US plan for 'regime change' in Moscow itself. In 2008 Moscow sent its troops to prevent the Georgian government from occupying the secessionist provinces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Putin deeply mistrusted the neoliberal, democratic world view of President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Relations went into a deep freeze, and there was much talk of a 'new Cold War'. Rivalry for influence over Ukraine culminated with Putin's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and support for secessionist rebels in East Ukraine, in response to which the US and EU imposed economic sanctions on Russia. In September 2015 Moscow sent military forces to Syria to prop up President Bashar al-Assad. The arrival of Donald Trump in the White House in 2017, with his lavish praise for Putin and reckless boasts to overturn the conventions of US foreign policy, took US–Russia relations into uncharted territory (see Key quotes 14.1).

The end of an era

The collapse of the Soviet Union on 25 December 1991 abruptly terminated a fifty-year-old struggle for global supremacy between the Soviet Union and the United States. It was a 'Cold War' because nuclear weapons prevented the two superpowers from attacking each other directly. Washington's relationship with Moscow was focused on preventing nuclear war and containing the arms race, while also striving to limit Soviet expansionism in the third world.

The Soviet Union collapsed as a result of Mikhail Gorbachev's efforts to reform the archaic Soviet economy and political system. Gorbachev's zeal to reform the Soviet system was in part a reaction to pressure from President Ronald Reagan—such as Reagan's support for the guerrillas fighting the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and the ambitious 'Star Wars' missile defence programme.

Most Americans believe that the USA won the Cold War, since it led to the spread of liberal democracy and market capitalism to eastern Europe, and left the USA as the sole superpower. But many Russians believe that the Cold War ended by mutual agreement, after which the US exploited the weakness of Russia in the 1990s to expand its influence deep into eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

The high point of cooperation between Moscow and Washington was August 1990, when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. Gorbachev supported the US plan to threaten Hussein with military action if he did not withdraw his forces. The Soviet Union's refusal to use its United Nations Security Council veto to protect its old ally Iraq was a clear signal that the Cold War era of superpower confrontation was over.

The Bush administration supported Soviet president Gorbachev to the very end and spurned contacts with Boris Yeltsin, the leader of the democratic opposition who was elected president of the Russian Federation, one of the fifteen republics that had made up the Soviet Union, in July 1991. In August 1991 hardliners launched an abortive coup in a desperate bid to maintain the Soviet Union. The coup failed because of massive protests in Moscow and other cities, and the defection of key military units. Power shifted from Gorbachev to Yeltsin, who met with the leaders of the other republics and agreed to dissolve the Soviet Union in December 1991.

The USA was delighted to see the end of the Soviet Union, but fearful of its consequences. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia triggered a number of bloody regional conflicts which needed to be contained. Above all, the USA wanted to prevent the proliferation of Soviet nuclear weapons to third countries or terrorist groups. Already in September 1991 President Bush unilaterally announced that the USA would destroy all its tactical battlefield nuclear weapons, and Gorbachev said the Soviet Union would do the same. Two US senators, Richard Lugar and Sam Nunn, introduced a bill pledging $400 million to help pay for the dismantling of Soviet nuclear weapons. Under the Cooperative Threat Reduction programme the USA poured $5 billion into paying for the dismantling or Russian nuclear weapons and funding Russian nuclear scientists to deter them from selling their expertise abroad. (Nevertheless, it is feared that some missile and nuclear weapon technology may have leaked from Russia to North Korea.) Under the 1994 'Megatons to Megawatts' programme, uranium from the dismantled warheads was converted into fuel for power plants and exported to the USA.

In a May 1992 meeting in Lisbon the foreign ministers of Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus bowed to US pressure and pledged to give up the nuclear weapons that were located on their territory. Bush and Yeltsin signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START II) in January 1993, under which they promised to reduce their arsenals to 3000–3500 strategic warheads each by 2003. This policy was embraced by Yeltsin's liberal foreign minister, Andrei Kozyrev, while Secretary of State James Baker had some difficulty persuading the Pentagon to accept such large cuts. START II also committed both sides to completely eliminate multiple warheads on land-based missiles. (MIRVs or multiple-warhead missiles were considered destabilizing because there was an incentive to launch them pre-emptively in a crisis, before they could be destroyed on the ground by a single incoming warhead.) START II was ratified by the US Senate in 1996, but not accepted by the Russian State Duma until 2000.

Russia experienced a profound economic crisis in the spring of 1992 as the government introduced radical reforms known as 'shock therapy'. Production plummeted while goods disappeared from the shelves and prices spiralled. The Bush administration was criticized for doing nothing as Russia fell into chaos. Former Republican President Richard Nixon wrote a memorandum entitled 'Who lost Russia?' Democratic candidate Bill Clinton talked about the need for a new Marshall Plan—even as he attacked Bush's preoccupation with foreign policy. In response Bush announced in April 1992 a $24 billion international aid package, including $5 billion from the USA. Russia took responsibility for the Soviet Union's $65 billion international debts, but was unable to make the payments. The lenders rolled over unpaid interest into the debt to avoid declaring Russia in default.

KEY POINTS

- In December 1991, the Soviet Union ceased to exist as a geopolitical entity. With its demise the central organizing principle of US foreign policy since 1945—containing the Soviet threat—no longer existed.
- Boris Yeltsin rose to prominence through semi-free elections, and after the collapse of the Soviet government in August 1991 he promised to lead the Russian Federation to a better future in cooperation with the West.
- The United States sought to limit the threats posed by the immediate transition, especially by persuading the newly independent states to relinquish their nuclear arsenals.

Bill and Boris

Bill Clinton took office in January 1993 with high hopes that a partnership with Russia could be the linchpin for America's role in the post–Cold War world. The goal was to transform Russia into what Clinton called a 'market democracy', while integrating it into international institutions. Clinton was influenced by the 'democratic peace' theory, which was experiencing an academic revival. Since democracies do not go to war with each other, it was in America's best interests to ensure that Russia became a democracy. (See Controversies 14.1.)

Clinton appointed his former Oxford flatmate, Russia expert Strobe Talbott, as point man for relations with Russia. (Talbott served as counsellor and then Deputy Secretary of State from 1993 to 2000.) Talbott's close personal relationship with Clinton meant that secretaries of state Warren Christopher and Madeleine Albright had a less prominent role in USA–Russia relations than one might have expected. National security adviser Anthony Lake was sceptical about the scope for democratic transition in Russia, but likewise deferred to Talbott.

Yeltsin and Clinton seemed to hit it off at their first meeting in April 1993, backslapping and bear-hugging. Both sides declared their readiness to create a 'dynamic and effective Russo-American partnership'. Clinton promised a financial aid package of $1.6 billion (half aid and half credits), predicated on the assumption that Yeltsin was introducing reforms that would create a market democracy. Clinton visited Russia in January 1994, and by the end of his term the two men had met no less than eighteen times. Clinton was fully aware of Yeltsin's idiosyncrasies, telling Talbott on one occasion that 'Yeltsin drunk was better than most of the alternatives sober'.

The USA clung to this policy despite a series of events indicating that all was not well, such as Yeltsin's shelling of the opposition-controlled parliament in October 1993 and the invasion of the breakaway province of Chechnya in December 1994. New York University professor Stephen Cohen ridiculed the Clinton administration's approach as a 'failed crusade' that strove to remake Russia in America's image. Russia expert Dmitri Simes argued that the United States was mistakenly treating Russia as if it were a 'defeated enemy'. Many Russians came to blame the chaos of the early 1990s on the capitalist reforms that they believed were forced on Russia at America's insistence (see Key quotes 14.2).

CONTROVERSIES 14.1: DEBATES IN US–RUSSIA RELATIONS

Building market democracy in Russia

Yes: Russia had a good chance of becoming a stable market economy with democratic political institutions, and the United States had a responsibility to do all it could to bring that about.

No: American interference in Russia's domestic politics and economics was bound to fail and cause a negative reaction from Russian elites.

NATO enlargement

Yes: NATO is a defensive alliance and Russia had nothing to fear from its enlargement into eastern Europe.

No: By expanding NATO the Western powers were effectively excluding Russia from the most important international security institution of post–Cold War Europe.

Relations with Putin

Yes: Russia is a great power due to its geographical presence in Eurasia, its seat in the United Nations Security Council, and its role as an energy exporter. The USA has to establish a good working relationship with whoever is in power in Moscow.

No: Putin is a dictatorial leader whose high approval rating rests on stoking Russian nationalism. His military aggression in Georgia and Ukraine violated international law. He cannot be trusted as a reliable partner.

KEY QUOTES 14.2: THE SPINACH TREATMENT

Behind the façade of friendship, Clinton administration officials expected the Kremlin to accept the United States' definition of Russia's national interests. Talbott and his aides referred to it as the spinach treatment.

(Dmitri Simes, President of the Nixon Institute, 2007)

The main vehicle for influencing Russian economic policy was International Monetary Fund loans, tied to the introduction of specific reform policies. At the suggestion of the Russians, a special commission was created to promote economic cooperation, jointly chaired by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and Vice-President Al Gore. It also handled some sensitive strategic issues such as Russian missile sales to Iran, cooperation in space launches, and the 'Megatons to Megawatts' programme.

The 1990s reforms produced few concrete results for US business interests. The privatization programme mostly excluded foreign buyers, and Russia took in less than $4 billion in foreign direct investment over the decade. The European Union was Russia's main economic partner, accounting for more than half of Russia's foreign trade, while the USA accounted for less than 5 per cent.

After the communist victory in the December 1995 State Duma election, Yeltsin appointed former foreign intelligence chief Yevgenii Primakov as foreign minister. Primakov tried to move Russia away from its dependency on the United States, sometimes talking about a strategic triad of Russia, China, and India. But Primakov realized that the USA was the dominant power, and in practice he effected only minor course corrections in the Moscow–Washington relationship.

Boris Yeltsin faced the daunting task of winning re-election in June 1996. He was deeply unpopular. The war in Chechnya was ongoing, and the economy was in its sixth year of decline. Many of his advisers urged him to cancel the election, but he went ahead with the vote and managed to win a second term, thanks to a massive media campaign and an influx of IMF loans, used to pay off wage and pension arrears. Washington breathed a huge sigh of relief. A cancelled election—or a communist victory—would have been the end of the road for Clinton's democratic transition paradigm.

Russia was not yet out of the woods, however. The 1997 Asian financial crisis triggered a slump in world oil prices, hitting Russia's export earnings and government revenue. A growing fiscal deficit was covered by reckless external borrowing. Despite a last-minute $22 billion IMF rescue package, the ruble crashed in August 1998, losing 75 per cent of its value. The government went into default on its debts. The crisis forced the resignation of Yeltsin's new liberal prime minister, Sergei Kirienko, and his replacement by the conservative Primakov. The crisis shattered any illusions that Russia was in transition to stable market democracy (see Key quotes 14.3).

KEY QUOTES 14.3: RUSSIA'S DEMOCRATIC PROSPECTS

A true and lasting transition to normalcy, democracy, and free markets in Russia is neither inevitable nor impossible. It is an open question.

(*Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, October 1998*)

KEY POINTS

- The relationship forged by the two leaders, Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin, was cemented by what Clinton saw as Yeltsin's commitment to reforms to modernize the Russian state and economy. The two men thought American assistance and expertise could transform Russia into a 'market democracy'.
- The reforms failed, and as Russia's economy shrank the quality of life for many Russians plummeted. The economy was dealt a further blow by the August 1998 financial crash.
- Yeltsin did manage to win re-election in 1996, which enabled the USA to continue in its commitment to building democracy in Russia.

NATO enlargement

The main problem in the USA–Russia relationship was the US plan to expand the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) into central Europe. NATO had been created in 1949 to deter the Soviet military threat, so Moscow argued that since the Soviet Union and its military alliance, the Warsaw Pact, had dissolved in 1991, NATO should follow suit. Yeltsin withdrew Russian troops from the Baltic countries and eastern Europe—but only after the USA promised funds to build housing for officers relocated to Russia. The USA withdrew most of its 300,000 troops stationed in Europe, but did not want to dismantle NATO—which it saw not only as a highly successful defensive alliance, but also a vehicle for projecting stability into eastern Europe.

Initially, the USA had hoped that the European Union (EU) would take the lead in integrating the former socialist countries. But it was clear that preparing the central European countries for full EU membership would take many years. A sense of urgency was introduced by the first-place finish of the

semi-fascist Liberal Democratic Party, led by Vladimir Zhirinovsky, in the State Duma elections in December 1993. This prompted Clinton to approve NATO enlargement in Prague in January 1994 ('not if, but when').

The year 1995 saw renewed fighting in Bosnia, culminating in NATO's airpower intervention on the side of the Bosnian Muslims and Croats. The US-brokered November 1995 Dayton Accords brought peace to Bosnia, and Russia was invited to send peacekeepers to join NATO's implementation force there.

For Clinton, NATO enlargement was an insurance policy that protected US interests in case Russia 'went bad' (see Key quotes 14.4). Clinton delayed NATO expansion until after Yeltsin's hotly contested election battle in June 1996. In October 1996 Clinton set a deadline of 1999 for the first wave of NATO enlargement. In December 1996 the hard-line Madeleine Albright replaced Warren Christopher as Secretary of State. Countries joining the alliance receive a security guarantee: Article V of the NATO Charter pledges all signatories to come to the aid of a fellow member under attack. In July 1997 NATO's Madrid summit invited Poland, Czech Republic, and Hungary to join the alliance. In April 1998 the Senate approved NATO expansion by 80 to 19. On 12 March 1999 Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic joined NATO, bringing the alliance to 19 countries. Countries that were not candidates for membership in the immediate future would be offered a Partnership for Peace cooperation plan.

KEY QUOTES 14.4: 'WE HAD A DEAL'

I told Yeltsin that if he would agree to NATO expansion and the NATO–Russian partnership, I would make a commitment not to station troops or missiles in the new member countries prematurely, and to support Russian membership in the new G-8, the World Trade Organization, and other international organizations. We had a deal.

(President Bill Clinton, at a meeting in Helsinki in March 1997)

Moscow objected to NATO expansion, which stoked fears of 'capitalist encirclement' among communists and nationalists. In protest at NATO enlargement, the State Duma refused to ratify the START II treaty. In 1996 Clinton and Yeltsin initialled a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (including a ban on underground tests), but the US Senate rejected the treaty in 1999. In 1997 Russia started deploying a new intercontinental missile, the SSX-27 Topol-M, and introduced a new National Security Concept—one that seemed to show a greater willingness to be the first to use nuclear weapons.

In order to mitigate Russia's feeling of exclusion, in May 1997 the NATO–Russia Founding Act created a Permanent Joint Council in Brussels. Also, in June 1997, Yeltsin was invited to attend the Group of Seven (G-7) annual meeting of leaders of the foremost developed democracies. Russia won full membership in the G-8 in 2002, one of the few Western organizations it was allowed to join. There was no progress with Russia's application to enter the World Trade Organization (WTO), which it commenced in 1993. Russia did join the Council of Europe in 1996, where its actions in Chechnya were sharply criticized. It continued as a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which tried ineffectively to resolve the 'frozen conflicts' in Moldova, Georgia, and Azerbaijan.

KEY POINTS

- In March 1999, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic joined NATO.
- Russia strongly objected to the expansion of the NATO alliance into countries that had once been part of the Soviet Union's Warsaw Pact security organization.
- To placate Russia it was allowed to join the G-7 group of leading democracies.

The Kosovo crisis

On 24 March 1999, just two weeks after the three new members joined the alliance, NATO planes started bombing Yugoslavia. President Slobodan Milosevic refused to accept the intervention of international peacekeepers to halt violence in the rebellious province of Kosovo. The bombing commenced as Prime Minister Primakov was flying to the USA to ask for more financial aid. Primakov ordered his aircraft to turn around mid-Atlantic and head back to Russia: a step that became symbolic of a new chill in US–Russian relations. Russia was incensed that the United States was using brute force to advance its political agenda in Europe.

Moscow saw itself as having close historical ties with the Serbs. But in reality the relationship had been

dormant since the Second World War, and Moscow had little interest in tying itself to the sinking ship of Slobodan Milošević. The US bombing campaign stalled, and in June 1999 Moscow seized the chance to play the peacemaker. The former prime minister Viktor Chernomyrdin was sent to Belgrade to explain that NATO was preparing a ground invasion. But if Milosevic agreed to withdraw his troops from Kosovo, Russia would participate in the military occupation, and would try to preserve Yugoslavia's formal sovereignty over the province. In a curious footnote to the crisis, several hundred Russian peacekeepers drove down from Bosnia to seize the Kosovo airport before advancing British troops arrived. An armed clash was only averted thanks to the cool head of the British commander at the scene.

KEY POINT

- Moscow saw the US action in Kosovo as an unjustified use of force in its sphere of influence, and felt embarrassment at its seeming impotence in the face of US military might.

The struggle for influence in the post-Soviet space

The USA had a strategic interest in securing the viability of the newly independent ex-Soviet states, and preventing their possible absorption into a revived Soviet Union. US aid and advisers flowed into the region. The transition to 'market democracy' was successful in the three Baltic states, but much more challenging in the other countries, which had weak states and weaker economies, and lacked a tradition of self-rule. Civil wars raged in Tajikistan, Moldova, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Former Communist Party leaders stayed on as authoritarian presidents in every Central Asian country except Kyrgyzstan, where a reformist president came to power.

The Caspian basin holds valuable oil and gas reserves. The USA promoted the building of pipelines to export Caspian oil and gas to world markets via Georgia and Turkey, cutting out Iran and Russia. Moscow regarded the region as part of its exclusive sphere of influence, and saw the rivalry for Caspian oil as a zero-sum game in which US advances would come at Russian expense.

Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan opened the doors to Western investors. In 1993 Texaco (now Chevron) entered Kazakhstan to develop the giant Tengiz field, and built a new export pipeline to the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiysk. In 1994 British Petroleum (BP) signed 'the contract of the century' with Azerbaijan to develop offshore fields in the Caspian. Production started in 1997. BP wanted to build a 1100-mile pipeline from Baku through Tbilisi to Ceyhan (known as the BTC pipeline) on Turkey's Mediterranean coast. A complicating factor was the 1992–4 war over the disputed province of Nagorno-Karabakh, which left Armenian forces occupying 15 per cent of Azerbaijan's territory. In 1993 the Armenian-American lobby persuaded the US Congress to enact Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, barring direct US aid to the Azerbaijani government so long as it maintained a blockade and state of war with Armenia. President Bush lifted Section 907 in 2002, in return for Azerbaijan's cooperation in the war on terror. Work started on the BTC pipeline that year and it became operational in 2006. The West also wanted to export Kazakh oil and Turkmen gas by building pipelines across the Caspian Sea to Baku. But Russia used a dispute over the legal status of the Caspian to block plans for an undersea pipeline. Instead, the Central Asians built export pipelines to China.

Under the Partnership for Peace programme, NATO held joint exercises in Uzbekistan in 1998, and ran military assistance programmes in Georgia and Azerbaijan. The latter countries looked to Western help to regain control over breakaway regions that had established de facto independence with Russian military support. Ukraine sought closer ties with NATO and the EU, but corruption and economic stagnation limited the scope for real reform. President Leonid Kuchma (in office 1996–2004) tried to follow a balanced course between Russia and the West, aware of Ukraine's dependence on Russian gas imports and the presence of 12 million ethnic Russians in east Ukraine.

KEY POINTS

- The United States established a diplomatic and economic presence in the new states of the Caucasus and Central Asia, focusing on the development of oil and gas reserves.
- Russia tried to block US initiatives in what it regarded as its own sphere of influence.

A new face in the Kremlin—and the White House

Fighting broke out again in Chechnya in August 1999, which had been de facto independent since the withdrawal of Russian troops in 1996. The next month saw several terrorist apartment bombings in Moscow and elsewhere. Yeltsin appointed as prime minister Vladimir Putin, a seventeen-year KGB veteran who was heading the Federal Security Service. Putin launched a second invasion of Chechnya. Yeltsin resigned on New Year's Eve and appointed Putin 'acting president', and Putin went on to win the presidential election in March 2000.

Washington looked on with resigned detachment: it no longer thought it could influence the outcome of Russian elections. Moscow seemed increasingly irrelevant to global affairs, saddled by economic volatility, corruption, and political instability.

Putin was an unknown quantity to Western leaders. His KGB background and ruthless prosecution of the war in Chechnya gave cause for concern. On the other hand, in personal meetings he impressed European leaders with his charm and intelligence. While moving quickly to restore the Kremlin's control over Russian society, Putin realized that integration within the global economy was essential to rebuild Russian state power. Europe's economic strength and America's military muscle left Russia with no choice but to cooperate with these twin powers.

Arms control was the main item on the agenda during President Clinton's farewell visit to Moscow in June 2000. The USA wanted to amend the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Defence (ABM) treaty and begin testing a missile defence system to counter a possible nuclear strike from Iraq or North Korea. Moscow feared that such a system could threaten Russia's ability to retaliate against a US first strike. The US Senate approved the development of theatre missile defence (TMD) in Europe in March 1999. In a bid to head off TMD, in 2000 Putin had the State Duma ratify START II, signed in 1993. However, Clinton could not offer deep cuts in strategic missiles because of Republican opposition in Congress. In the November 2000 election the Republicans attacked the Democratic candidate, Vice-President Al Gore, for supporting Yeltsin's corrupt regime, and for making secret deals with Russia over its arms deliveries to Iran.

The Russians were not happy to see George W. Bush win the November 2000 election. Condoleezza Rice, Bush's national security adviser, said in a February 2001 interview that 'I believe Russia is a threat to the West in general and to our European allies in particular' (*Le Figaro* no. 1059, 10 February 2001; see also Key quotes 14.5). After the February 2001 arrest of FBI agent Robert Hanssen, who had spied for the Russians for fifteen years, the USA ejected fifty Russian diplomats. The Russians reacted by expelling an equivalent number of American officials.

Meanwhile Putin was flexing his diplomatic muscles. In July 2000 he visited Pyongyang and tried to persuade North Korea to discontinue its missile programme. In March 2001 Putin pledged to complete the long-stalled Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran. Putin also stepped up military and political cooperation with China.

It was not until June 2001 that Bush and Putin finally met, in Ljubljana, Slovenia. President Bush said that he 'looked the man in his eye' and 'was able to get a sense of his soul'. He said, 'I am convinced that he and I can build a relationship of mutual respect and candor', and promised support for Russia's entry into the WTO. Putin said he and Bush had forged a 'very high level of trust', and referred to the American president as a 'partner'. And then came 11 September.

KEY QUOTES 14.5: TIME FOR A NEW APPROACH

The Clinton administration's embrace of Yeltsin and those who were thought to be reformers around him has failed … Support for democracy and economic reform became support for Yeltsin. His agenda became the American agenda. The United States certified that reform was taking place where it was not, continuing to disburse money from the International Monetary Fund in the absence of any evidence of serious change.

There is no longer a consensus in America or Europe on what to do next with Russia. Frustrated expectations and 'Russia fatigue' are direct consequences of the 'happy talk' in which the Clinton administration engaged. … American security is threatened less by Russia's strength than by its weakness and incoherence.

(Condoleezza Rice, G. W. Bush's top foreign policy adviser, November 2000)

KEY POINTS

- The ailing economy, the war in Chechnya, and the weakness of the state were the priorities on Vladimir Putin's agenda as he assumed power in 1999.
- President George W. Bush saw Russia as in a weakened state, and relations with Moscow were not a priority for the new administration.
- The United States and Russia attempted to find common ground on arms control, but Putin was opposed to the US missile defence effort.

Partners in the war on terror

Putin was the first leader to telephone Bush with condolences after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. Putin, still embroiled in the second Chechen war, saw 9/11 as vindicating his warnings about the threat of militant Islam.

Putin shared intelligence to aid Washington's campaign against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. According to some reports, Putin only agreed to the US establishing bases in Central Asia after Uzbek president Islam Karimov said he would cooperate with the Americans whatever Moscow's position. Russia was not pleased by the prospect of an indefinite US military presence in the region. After the toppling of the Taliban regime, Russia declined to send peacekeepers, given its bitter experiences after the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In 2003 NATO took over the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan—the alliance's first deployment outside Europe. Some Russian foreign policy elites thought that 9/11 would weaken the US proclivity for unilateral action by demonstrating America's vulnerability. In this they were sorely mistaken.

Putin was rewarded with a personal visit to the presidential ranch in Crawford, Texas, in November 2001 (see Key quotes 14.6). A joint statement declared that 'neither country regards the other as an enemy or threat'. Bush asked Congress to lift the 1974 Jackson–Vanik amendment, which required annual vetting of Russia's emigration policies to maintain normal trade relations with the USA. But Congress did not budge. The USA was now suggesting that the whole concept of formal treaties defining strategic arsenals was an irrelevant relic of the Cold War. In December 2001 the USA announced that it would withdraw from the ABM treaty in six months' time. In return for Putin's muted acquiescence, in May 2002 Bush signed the Strategic Offensive Weapons Reduction Treaty in Moscow, under which each side promised to cut its strategic weapons from 6,000 warheads to 1,700–2,200 over ten years. But the treaty, unlike START II, did not mandate the destruction of warheads and had no on-site verification procedures. It was ratified by the State Duma in May 2003.

KEY QUOTES 14.6: PARTNERS IN THE WAR ON TERROR

We affirm our determination to meet the threats to peace in the 21st century. Among these threats are terrorism, the new horror of which was vividly demonstrated by the evil crimes of September 11 … We have agreed that the current levels of our nuclear forces do not reflect the strategic realities of today. … We support the building of a European-Atlantic community whole, free, and at peace, excluding no one, and respecting the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations.

(Joint US–Russian statement after the presidential summit in Crawford, Texas, November 2001)

It still looked as if a strategic partnership based on mutual security interests might be a realistic goal. The May 2002 Rome summit saw the creation of a new NATO–Russia Council (19 plus 1) to give Russia a new voice in the alliance. However, in November 2002 the NATO summit in Prague invited Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia to join. Those seven countries subsequently entered NATO in March 2004, and five of them joined the European Union alongside Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic in May 2004. (Bulgaria and Romania joined in January 2007.) In 2007 Russia still did not have ratified border treaties with Estonia and Latvia. The Baltic countries would probably not have been allowed into the EU had they not already been in NATO, because the EU would have been wary of the unresolved security issues with Russia.

The USA even grew interested in Russia as a possible source of energy supplies. The fact that fifteen of the nineteen 11 September hijackers were Saudis raised doubts about the reliability of Saudi Arabia, the linchpin of US energy policy. Perhaps Russia, the world's second-greatest oil exporter, could be used to break the OPEC stranglehold on the global oil

market. Russian oil output had recovered since 1998, accounting for half the increase in world oil supply between 1998 and 2004. The oligarchs who controlled most of Russia's oil industry were looking for Western partners. In 2003 the TNK (Tyumen oil company) merged with BP, and Mikhail Khodorkovsky's Yukos, Russia's largest oil corporation, was looking for a Western partner. Some argued that the oil oligarchs were a pro-Western elite that would take control of Russia once Putin, a transitional post-Yeltsin figure, had stepped down. The rising oil price boosted Russia's economy: in 2006 it paid down its entire $22 billion debt to the IMF ahead of schedule.

KEY POINTS

- Putin's support for the USA in the wake of 9/11 revived hopes for a strategic partnership between Russia and the United States.
- Presidents Bush and Putin managed to strike up a warm personal relationship at their summit meetings in Slovenia and in Crawford, Texas, in 2001.

A reversal of course

However, the tide of USA–Russia relations turned decisively for the worse in the course of 2003, for three reasons: the US-led war in Iraq; Putin's crackdown on political opposition; and the wave of 'colour revolutions' that brought regime change to three post-Soviet states. (See Key quotes 14.7.)

KEY QUOTES 14.7: VLADIMIR PUTIN

Those who confront us need a weak and ill state. Regrettably, there are those inside the country who feed off foreign embassies like jackals and count on support of foreign funds and governments, and not their own people. If these gentlemen return back to power, they will again cheat people and fill their pockets.

(Vladimir Putin, speaking to an election rally in November 2007)

I looked into Mr. Putin's eyes and I saw three things—a K and a G and a B.

(Senator John McCain in July 2007, referring to President Bush's 2001 comment that he had 'looked into Putin's soul')

The looming Iraq War was a major challenge for Putin. In November 2002 Russia reluctantly accepted United Nations Resolution 1441 forcing Iraq to accept weapons inspectors. On 5 March 2003 the leaders of France, Germany, and Russia publicly stated they would block UN approval for war against Iraq. The USA went ahead with the invasion anyway. After the fall of Baghdad, Secretary of State Rice decided in her words to 'punish France, ignore Germany and forgive Russia'. Putin (accurately) predicted that the invasion would be a military and political disaster. Russia was also aggrieved over losing $8 billion that Iraq owed for past arms deliveries and the contracts it had to develop Iraqi oil fields.

In 2003 Putin moved against the ambitious oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky—the richest man in Russia, with an estimated net worth of $16 billion. Khodorkovsky was arrested and sentenced to eight years' imprisonment on charges of tax evasion and fraud. His real sin was funding parties across the political spectrum in the run-up to the December 2003 State Duma election, with a view to mounting a challenge to Putin in the March 2004 presidential election. But the pro-Kremlin United Russia Party won a sweeping victory in the Duma election. In 2004 Putin abolished direct elections for regional governors, and a new law made it even more difficult for opposition parties to enter parliament. Russia's return to a centralized, authoritarian system of power seemed complete. The US human rights group Freedom House downgraded Russia from 'free' to 'partly free' in 2004.

Meanwhile, Putin extended Kremlin control over the Russian economy. Yukos assets were seized for tax arrears and sold off to state-owned Rosneft. The independent oil company Sibneft was forced to merge with state-owned Gazprom. Putin oversaw the creation of a network of state-owned corporations in energy and engineering and appointed Kremlin officials to chair their boards. Foreign oil companies were forced to give up majority control in the handful of joint ventures that had been allowed to start in the 1990s.

In November 2003 a US-backed opposition movement swept Mikheil Saakashvili to power in Georgia's 'Rose Revolution'. The Kremlin saw a US plot to encircle Russia with pro-Western governments. In the same month, a last-minute US intervention derailed a Russian plan for a settlement between Moldova and the breakaway province of Transnistria. In response, Putin refused to withdraw Russian peacekeepers from the secessionist regions of Georgia and Moldova.

In March 2004 veteran diplomat Sergei Lavrov replaced Igor Ivanov as Foreign Minister. In his May 2004 State of the Union Address, Putin warned Western groups not to meddle in Russia's domestic politics. In an angry speech after the Beslan tragedy in September 2004, Putin publicly referred to Western threats against Russia, for the first time since 2001. 'We showed weakness,' Putin said, 'and weak people are beaten.' A new law in 2005 cracked down on foreign-financed NGOs. (The US Peace Corps had already been expelled from Russia in 2002.)

Putin's clumsy efforts to influence the Ukrainian presidential election of November 2004 backfired, helping to spark an 'Orange Revolution' that replicated the victory of pro-Western forces in Georgia the previous year. That was followed by a 'Tulip Revolution' in Kyrgyzstan in March 2005, ousting President Askar Akayev. However, the tide of colour revolutions ended with a massacre of protestors in the Uzbek city of Andizhan in 2005. After criticism from the US, President Islam Karimov closed the US base in Uzbekistan.

After pro-western Viktor Yushchenko became president of Ukraine, Putin tried to end the flow of cheap gas to that country. Russia was selling natural gas to Ukraine for $47 per 1000 cubic metres while European customers were paying $230. Russia's main gas export pipeline to Europe crosses Ukraine, so in January 2006 when Gazprom shut down the pipeline for a few days it alarmed its Western customers. Commentators started talking of Russia as an 'energy superpower'.

Putin was further angered by the Western recognition of the independence of Kosovo in February 2008. President George W. Bush had been keen to enlarge NATO further east as part of his post-9/11 'Freedom' agenda. However, at the April 2008 Bucharest summit NATO's European members blocked Bush's plan to offer Ukraine and Georgia a membership action plan.

KEY POINTS

- The US-led war in Iraq led to sharp deterioration in US-Russian relations.
- Putin's crackdown on political opposition, symbolized by the arrest of oil magnate Mikhail Khodorkovsky in October 2003, cast a shadow over his acceptability as a trusted partner for the United States.
- The 'colour revolutions' in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan were seen by Moscow as part of an American plot to undermine Russian influence in the post-Soviet region.

Medvedev and Obama

Putin surprised many observers in 2008 by following the constitutional requirement that he step down after two terms as president. However, he nominated his long-time aide Dmitry Medvedev as president, while taking on the job of prime minister himself.

There was optimism in Washington that the arrival of Medvedev in the Kremlin provided a new beginning in US–Russia relations (see Key quotes 14.8). Medvedev was 13 years younger than Putin, and had no KGB background. He was more technologically savvy: Putin rarely used the internet, let alone a smart phone.

KEY QUOTES 14.8: A NEW FACE

To use the words of John Le Carré, Russia has 'come in from the cold' after almost a century of isolation and self-isolation.

(President Dmitry Medvedev, speaking in Berlin in June 2008)

However, hopes for a new dawn in US–Russia relations were dashed by the war in Georgia which erupted on 7 August 2008. Mercurial Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili, a close US ally, sent Georgian troops to occupy the secessionist province of South Ossetia, killing two Russian peacekeepers in the process. Russia responded rapidly, driving back the Georgian forces with air strikes and armored columns. They were only persuaded not to occupy Tbilisi and overthrow Saakashvili by some deft diplomacy by French president Nicholas Sarkozy. The five-day war was a decisive victory for Russia's armed forces, and a humiliation for NATO, unable to defend its ally. Worse still, on 26 August Medvedev, citing the precedent of Kosovo, announced that Russia would grant diplomatic recognition to Abkhazia and South Ossetia (which had been de facto independent from Georgia since 1992). Virtually no other countries followed Russia in granting recognition—not even Belarus.

On 31 August, Medvedev gave a speech in Sochi in which he listed five principles behind Russian foreign policy: respect for international law; no to unipolarity; no to isolation; protection of Russian citizens abroad; and the claim that 'Russia has areas of privileged interests'. Medvedev, it seemed, was not such a liberal after all.

In the wake of the Georgian war, Poland agreed to a US plan to install missile batteries on Polish territory,

with radar in Czech Republic, ostensibly to intercept missiles launched from Iran. Russia claimed that the real goal was to protect against Russian missiles (since Iran did not have any long-range missiles nor nuclear warheads to put on them). However, fearful of further antagonizing Russia, at the NATO summit in December 2008 France and Germany blocked a US proposal to offer a membership action plan to Georgia and Ukraine.

The inauguration of Barack Obama in January 2009 renewed hopes of a fresh start (see Key quotes 14.9). In March, Secretary of State Hilary Clinton met with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Geneva and presented him with a red button marked 'reset'. The stunt backfired due to a translation error: the Russian word on the button was 'overload'. In July 2009 Obama visited Moscow for the first time, and persuaded Medvedev to allow the US to fly troops and ship non-lethal supplies by train across Russia to Afghanistan. However, Medvedev refused to sanction Iran because of its nuclear weapons program. Earlier in the year Kyrgyzstan had threatened to close the US base in that country, the hub of the US Afghanistan supply network, but backed off after the US increased the rent. In September 2009, as a gesture of goodwill, Obama shelved the Polish missile defence plan.

KEY QUOTES 14.9: OBAMA PINS HIS HOPES ON A NEW RUSSIAN LEADER

I think that it's important that, even as we move forward with President Medvedev, that Putin understand that the old cold war approaches to US–Russian relations is outdated—that it's time to move forward in a different direction. I think Medvedev understands that. I think Putin has one foot in the old ways of doing business and one foot in the new.

(President Barack Obama in an AP interview on the eve of his first visit to Russia in July 2009)

The 'reset' bore fruit in April 2010 with the signing of a new START treaty, approved by Congress in December 2010. The new treaty cut warheads on each side to 1675 and delivery vehicles to 1100, down from the 1600 allowed under START I, which expired in December 2009. (The US had 1198 missiles and bombers and 5576 warheads, while Russia had 816 vehicles with 3909 warheads.) Start II allowed on-site inspection but did not mandate destruction of removed warheads. Russia failed in its effort to include language prohibiting missile defence. Later in the year Medvedev agreed to UN Security Council sanctions on Iran, and dropped plans to sell the S300 air defence system to that country.

In May 2010, for the first time, US troops marched in Moscow's World War Two victory parade. In June 2010, on his first official visit to the US, Medvedev toured Silicon Valley and ate a burger with Obama in a Washington, DC diner. However, past antagonism reared its head later that summer with the arrest of a dozen Russian 'sleeper' spies in the US, who were later exchanged for some alleged American 'spies' in Russia.

KEY POINTS

- The 2008 war in Georgia signalled a new tougher foreign policy line in Moscow.
- Incoming president Barack Obama tried to 'reset' relations with the new Russian president, Dmitry Medvedev.

Putin returns to the presidency

The faltering 'reset' was derailed by the Arab Spring: a wave of popular protests beginning in January 2011 that toppled dictators in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya and ignited civil war in Syria. Moscow saw the Arab Spring as an American plot to spread democracy and remove pro-Russian leaders. In March 2011 the UN Security Council authorized military action to establish a no-fly zone in Libya. Medvedev abstained, rather than use Russia's veto. Putin unequivocally condemned the NATO action in Libya as a 'crusade': one of the few examples of public disagreement between the two Russian leaders. NATO soon went beyond the no-fly zone, with a bombing campaign to oust President Muammar Gaddafi. Gaddafi's subsequent murder by rebels, captured in a gruesome video, enraged Putin. For Russia, Libya illustrated the perfidy of the West and Washington's penchant for using military force without considering its long-term consequences. Russia subsequently used its veto at the UN to block all calls for sanctions on Syria.

On the domestic front, the Russian economy was dealt a severe blow by the 2008 financial crisis. World oil prices plummeted, and investors pulled out of the Russian market. The Russian GDP fell 8 per cent in 2009, the largest drop of any industrial economy, and the ruble plunged in value. In September 2011 Putin surprised observers by announcing that he would run

for the presidency in 2012. It had been widely assumed that Medvedev would be allowed to run for a second term, but Putin apparently felt that the ongoing economic crisis and tense international situation required him to return as head of state. Medvedev would return to the post of prime minister.

The abrupt announcement of the leadership switch led many Russians to protest, focused on fears that the December 2011 State Duma elections would be rigged in favour of the ruling United Russia party. Several hundred thousand took to the streets in Moscow and a few other cities: the largest demonstrations since 1991. Putin responded by cracking down on the opposition, banning marches and arresting leaders, while also arranging demonstrations by pro-Putin youth organizations. He also launched a propaganda campaign appealing to traditional Russian nationalism in contrast to Western values such as gay rights. The jailing of two Pussy Riot activists for protesting inside a church drew a lot of attention in the West. Putin also pursued a 'nationalization of the elite' through bans on foreign bank accounts and even foreign travel for certain categories of official. Putin apparently believed that Secretary Clinton was trying to use the protests in the winter of 2011–12 to bring about 'regime change' in Moscow. It did not help that soon after arriving in Moscow in January 2012 the new US ambassador, Michael McFaul, met with opposition activists at the embassy. A Russian TV crew was there to record their arrival, playing into the Kremlin line that the opposition were tools of US foreign policy.

The re-election of Barack Obama in November 2012 raised hopes that US–Russian relations could be launched on a fresh course. The nightmare scenario of a presidency headed by the Republic candidate Mitt Romney (see Key quotes 14.10) and staffed with neocons had been averted. Romney had accused Obama of being soft on Russia. A case in point: in Seoul in March 2012 Obama was caught by a 'hot mike' telling Medvedev that 'After my election, I have more flexibility' with respect to missile defence.

KEY QUOTES 14.10: PUTIN IS OUR ENEMY

Russia is without question our No. 1 geopolitical foe. They fight for every cause for the world's worst actors.

(Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney, in a CNN interview, March 2012)

But the ink was barely dry on Obama's electoral returns when the US House of Representatives passed the Magnitsky Act, sanctioning several dozen individual Russian officials involved in the persecution of Sergei Magnitsky. Magnitsky was a lawyer for the Western-owned Hermitage investment fund whose assets were seized in a spurious tax evasion case. Magnitsky was jailed on tax-evasion charges and died in custody in 2009. President Medvedev's own human rights commission reported in July 2011 that Magnitsky was probably beaten prior to his death. Russian nationalists in the State Duma retaliated by passing the 'Dima Yakovlev' Act banning foreigners from adopting Russian orphans, named after a Russian boy who died at the hands of his US foster parents.

In 2012 Russia finally joined the World Trade Organization, nineteen years after its initial application. Russia had signed bilateral agreements with nearly all the 150 WTO member countries: the USA was the main holdout. But the US Congress still refused to lift the 1974 Jackson-Vanik Amendment restricting Russia's right to trade based on their emigration policies.

In 2013 Obama appointed Susan Rice as his new national security adviser. As ambassador to the United Nations, Rice had repeatedly clashed with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov as she orchestrated the NATO intervention in Libya. Human rights activist Samantha Power became the new US ambassador to the UN.

KEY POINTS

- The Arab Spring was seen by Moscow as part of a US plan to export democracy.
- Putin decided to return to the presidency in 2012, triggering mass protests.
- The new Putin administration embraced a nationalist, anti-American stance.

The Ukrainian crisis

Ukraine, tragically, would become a casualty of the growing east–west tension. It would see parts of its territory annexed by Russia, and fell into a civil war which killed more than 10,000 people.

In the 1990s, Russia and Ukraine established a modus vivendi of sorts. Under the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, brokered by the US, Russia recognized Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity—in

return for which Ukraine gave up any claim to the former Soviet nuclear weapons which were still located on its territory. In 1997 Kiev gave Russia a twenty-year lease on the Sevastopol naval base on the Crimea, home of Russia's Black Sea Fleet. In the mid-1990s Russian nationalists agitated for the return to Russia of Crimea, which had been transferred from the Russian Federation to Ukraine in 1954 to mark the three-hundredth anniversary of Ukraine's unification with Russia. Crimea was the only Ukrainian province where a majority (58 per cent) of the population was ethnic Russian. However, Yeltsin refused to give any support to this campaign, and it fizzled out.

Ukrainians complained that Russia never fully accepted their existence as a sovereign nation. Putin himself reportedly told President George W. Bush in 2008 that Ukraine 'is not even a country'.

Ukrainians resented the policies of the Soviet era which were aimed at suppressing Ukrainian culture—above all the 1932 famine (the Holodomor) that followed Stalin's collectivization drive. Moscow in turn objected to Kiev's efforts, following independence, to persuade the country's Russian-speakers, half the population, to adopt the Ukrainian language. On the other hand, the two countries continued to maintain close economic ties. Russia was Ukraine's largest trading partner, and much of Ukraine's steel and chemicals industry relied on cheap gas from Russia. Russia in turn was dependent on Ukraine for the transit of half its natural gas exports to Europe.

There was a surge of optimism in the West that Ukraine would become more democratic after the Orange Revolution in 2004, but that soon dissipated as the Yushchenko administration fell prey to the same kind of corruption and infighting that had dogged its predecessor. With the victory of the pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovich in elections in 2010, US strategy seemed to have reached a dead end. Washington effectively subcontracted Western policy towards Ukraine to its partners in Brussels. With 46 million inhabitants, Ukraine was too large, too poor, and too unstable to be a candidate for EU entry. In 2009 the EU launched a new Eastern Partnership program offering 'association status' for countries that were not on the membership track, including lower trade barriers and the possibility of visa-free travel. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov complained that 'What is the Eastern Partnership, if not an attempt to extend the EU's sphere of influence?' (Brussels, 21 March 2009).

The EU began negotiations for a free trade and association agreement with Ukraine in 2008. At the same time, in 2010 Yanukovich signed a deal extending Russia's 1997 lease of the Sevastopol naval base for 25 years beyond 2017, in return for a 30 per cent cut in the natural gas price; and the Ukrainian parliament voted to abandon NATO membership aspirations. In November 2011 former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko was jailed for seven years for abuse of office (when signing a 2009 gas deal with Russia). In April 2013 the European Court of Human Rights declared Tymoshenko's sentence illegal.

Putin was determined to prevent the expansion of EU influence. In 2010 Russia launched a Customs Union with Belarus and Kazakhstan, introducing tariff-free trade between the three countries. This was the precursor to the Eurasian Economic Union, to be launched in 2015. Armenia and Kyrgyzstan agreed to join and Putin hoped Ukraine would follow suit, but this would not be possible if Ukraine signed the free trade agreement with the EU.

The EU agreement with Ukraine was due to be signed at a summit in Vilnius on 29 November 2013. However, on 21 November Yanukovych announced that he would not sign the deal. Putin rewarded Yanukovych by agreeing to lend Ukraine $15 billion, and cutting the price of gas by a third. Yanukovych's *volte-face* triggered massive pro-European demonstrations in the Maidan square in central Kiev. Police efforts to clear the square by force only triggered broader protests. The US and the EU expressed their support for the demonstrators. US assistant secretary of state Victoria Nuland was filmed giving out sandwiches to Maidan protesters; and the Russians released a recording of a phone call in which she discussed who should run the post-Yanukovych government.

Shooting broke out between police and unidentified gunmen in the Maidan on 19 February 2014, leaving more than a hundred dead. This led to the collapse of the Ukrainian government and President Yanukovych fled to Russia. Moscow assumed the new government would sign the association agreement with the EU, apply to join NATO, and revoke the agreement granting Russia the use of the Sevastopol base. On 26 February 'little green men' (Russian special forces in unmarked uniforms) headed out from the naval base in Sevastopol and began occupying Ukrainian government buildings across the peninsula. At the same time Russian surrogates launched an insurrection in east and south Ukraine. In many cities with a Russian-speaking majority the revolt failed, but pro-Russian

forces seized control in the coal-mining regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. On 16 March Crimea held a referendum, with 83 per cent voting in favour of unification with Russia. Putin signed the union of Crimea with Russia into law two days later. The decision was wildly popular in Russia: the next month Putin's approval rating shot up from 60 per cent to 86 per cent.

Putin's decision to annex Crimea stunned the international community. Recognition of national sovereignty and the inviolability of borders are central to the international state system. The EU and US responded swiftly with 'smart' sanctions imposing asset freezes and travel bans on a few dozen politicians directly involved in the Crimean annexation. As the surrogate war raged in east Ukraine, on 16 July the US introduced 'sectoral' sanctions barring certain Russian companies from long-term borrowing. The next day separatists using missiles supplied by the Russian army shot down Malaysian Airlines flight 17, killing 298 people on board. This atrocity, and Russia's seeming unwillingness to help bring those responsible to justice, led the EU to join the US in imposing sectoral sanctions. Putin responded by introducing a ban on imports of foodstuffs from countries that had sanctioned Russia.

The new Ukrainian government signed the association agreement with the EU on 21 March 2014, with implementation of the economic dimension postponed for a year to allow for negotiations with Russia. Talks in Minsk under the auspices of the OSCE resulted in a shaky ceasefire in East Ukraine on 26 August, but agreement on a permanent solution remained out of reach. Kiev refused to yield to Russian demands that Ukraine abjure from NATO membership and grant full autonomy to the secessionists in Donetsk and Luhansk. Russia suspended gas deliveries through Ukraine in June 2014, but agreement was reached to restore supplies in October.

The Western players underestimated the importance of Ukraine to Putin and his willingness to break the rules of the post-1991 international system in order to prevent what he saw as threats to Russia's national interests (see Controversies 14.2). As British academic Andrew Wilson put it, the EU 'took a baguette to a knife fight' (*New York Times*, 14 December 2013). Nevertheless, the US and EU stood their ground. At the G-20 meeting in Brisbane in November 2014, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said that 'old thinking in spheres of influence together with the trampling of international law must not be allowed to succeed'. The collapse in the oil price in the second half of 2014 multiplied the impact of the financial sanctions, and plunged Russia into a currency crisis and recession. Putin hoped that the sanctions would be abandoned after a few months. But in 2017 they were still in place (see Key quotes 14.11). Despite the stagnant economy, Putin's popularity at home has not diminished at the time of writing.

KEY QUOTES 14.11: COMEBACK

Moscow has broken a post–Cold War US monopoly on the global use of force and has staged a spectacular geopolitical comeback in a region it had abandoned in the waning years of the Soviet Union.

(*Dmitry* Trenin, Russian foreign policy analyst, August 2017)

KEY POINTS

- The EU and Russia were competing to persuade Ukraine to join their respective free trade zones.
- President Yanukovych's decision to side with Russia led to a popular revolution which drove him from power in February 2014.
- Putin retaliated by annexing Crimea from Ukraine, and supported an insurrection in the Donbas region of Ukraine.

CONTROVERSIES 14.2: THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Ukraine has a right to choose its international partners

Yes: the Ukrainian people wanted closer ties with the EU but were prevented by their corrupt president siding with Moscow.

No: Cooperation with the EU would have led to Ukraine joining NATO, which would be a threat to Russia's vital security interests.

Crimea belongs to Ukraine

Yes: Russia's annexation of Crimea was a violation of international law, and the referendum was not a fair vote.

No: the majority of the Crimean population are ethnic Russians and voted democratically to join Russia.

The Syrian gambit

Meanwhile, the Syria civil war ground on. In August 2013 the forces of President Bashar al-Assad killed 1400 people in a Damascus suburb in a gas attack. A year earlier Obama had said that the use of chemical weapons would cross a 'red line', triggering military retaliation. However, Obama deferred to Congress, which voted against the use of force (see Chapter 12). That left an opening for Putin, who proposed to remove and destroy Assad's chemical arsenal, with US assistance. Assad's survival in power depended on Russian support, so he was forced to accede. Obama agreed, and the decommissioning was reportedly completed by June 2014, with 1290 tons of chemicals incinerated on a US ship.

This was a dramatic signal that the US was leaning back as a power in the Middle East, and Russia was leaning in. These trends were confirmed in September 2015 when Putin saved the Assad regime from imminent defeat by initiating air strikes against opposition forces. Eight times Russian diplomats used their veto in the UN Security Council to protect the Assad regime from international sanctions. In December 2016 the main opposition stronghold of Aleppo fell to Assad's forces, triggering another humanitarian catastrophe. Russia even got involved in the Libyan civil war, offering support to General Khalifa Haftar, the warlord who controls eastern Libya in defiance of the UN-backed Government of National Accord in Tripoli.

Putin found himself with some awkward allies in Syria—Tukey, Iran, and Hezbollah. In November 2015 Turkey shot down a Russian bomber, leading Russia to cut economic trade with that country. But after the attempted coup in Turkey in July 2016, President Recep Erdogan needed all the friends he could get: he apologized for the shoot-down and patched up his relationship with Putin. Thanks to Russian aid, Assad was 'winning' the war, but it was unlikely that he would be able to regain control over the entire territory of Syria. In January 2017, Russia, Turkey, and Iran convened peace talks in Astana, Kazakhstan, at which the warring parties sat down together for the first time. The US was not present.

Analysts struggled to understand Russia's strategic goals in Syria. It seemed a high price to pay to secure Russia's modest 'naval base' in Tartus, basically a refuelling station. In January 2017 Russia signed a new forty-nine-year lease on the base. The war provided a chance to test some of their new weapons systems in combat, and maybe attract a few new buyers. But it seems that Putin's main goals lay in prestige and geopolitics: Putin wanted to stand by his ally, to prevent yet another example of 'regime change' through external intervention, and to signal that Russia was back as a global player. The Russian public remained broadly supportive of Putin's assertive foreign policy.

KEY POINTS

- Putin was willing to send Russian military support to help keep President Bashar al-Assad in power in Syria.
- The US's unwillingness to use military force in Syria was a serious blow to US influence in the Middle East.

Enter Donald Trump

Trump's shocking victory over Hillary Clinton in November 2016 threw US diplomacy into turmoil. Pledging to 'Make America great again', Trump promised to tear up trade agreements with China and Mexico and the Iran nuclear deal, and questioned the utility of the NATO alliance. Curiously, Trump's vision of 'America first' included reconciliation with Russia. During the campaign Trump had nothing but praise for Putin (see Key quotes 14.12).

KEY QUOTES 14.12: TRUMP ON PUTIN

I think it would be great if we got along with Russia because we could fight ISIS together.

(*Donald Trump, October 2015*)

[On Putin] He's running his country and at least he's a leader, unlike what we have in this country. [When asked about the murders of Putin's opponents] Our country does plenty of killing, also.

(*Donald Trump, December 2015*)

After his election, Trump nominated as secretary of state the Exxon chief Rex Tillerson, a man with considerable experience working in Russia in partnership with Rosneft, the leading state-owned oil company headed by Putin's ally Igor Sechin. Indeed, Tillerson had been awarded the Order of Friendship by Putin in 2013. On the other hand, Trump's choice as

ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, condemned what she called Russia's 'aggressive actions' in East Ukraine and insisted that 'Our Crimea-related sanctions remain in place until Russia returns control over the peninsula to Ukraine'.

Many analysts expected Trump to seek rapprochement with Putin, lifting the economic sanctions and even recognizing the annexation of Crimea. It was unclear, however, what Russia would offer in return—such as enforcement of the Minsk accords, allowing the Ukrainian government to regain control of the border between Donbas and Russia. In any event, there was no such grand bargain, because the Trump administration was engulfed in a massive scandal around Russia's efforts to manipulate the US presidential election.

In July 2016 Wikileaks released 44,000 emails from the Democratic National Committee, exposing some unsavory manoeuvrings by the Clinton campaign. They had been purloined by two groups dubbed 'Cozy Bear' and 'Fancy Bear', linked to Russian military intelligence and Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB). The Obama administration released some information about the hacking in October 2016, but held back from full disclosure, wary of being accused of trying to interfere with the election. It was only after Trump's victory, on 29 December 2016, that President Obama publically accused Russia of trying to interfere in the election, and expelled thirty-five Russian diplomats. On 6 January 2017, the US director of national intelligence issued a report arguing that Russian officials had sponsored the hacking with the aim of increasing Trump's chances of victory, part of 'Moscow's longstanding desire to undermine the US-led liberal democratic order'. It was subsequently revealed that in addition to the anti-American propaganda of the RT international television channel, Russian sources had run an active disinformation campaign through social media such as Facebook and Twitter, creating fake pages and tweets to exacerbate political tensions in the US, ranging from maligning Hillary Clinton to both promoting and condemning the Black Lives Matter movement.

Attention also focused on the Russian business ties of the Trump family and staff, and possible collusion between them and Russian efforts to influence the election. Paul Manafort, Trump's campaign manager from March to August 2016, had had been paid $10 million a year from 2006 to 2009 by aluminum oligarch Oleg Deripaska to lobby for Russian interests, and after that had worked for the pro-Russian Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovych. As evidence of Manafort's influence, analysts pointed to the decision at the Republican National Convention in July 2016 to remove a pledge to provide military support to the Ukrainian government.

The intelligence committees of both houses of Congress launched investigations into Trump's Russian ties, as did the FBI. After Trump fired FBI director James Comey for allowing the Russia probe to continue, his successor appointed a special counsel, Robert Mueller, to head the investigation. The scandal claimed its first victim in February 2017, when General Mike Flynn, Trump's national security advisor, was forced to resign because of misleading comments about his conversations with the Russian ambassador to the US after the election. Flynn was replaced by General Harold McMaster, a hawk on Russia.

On 4 April 2017, Syrian aircraft used sarin gas to kill some eighty civilians in Khan Shaykhoun. Trump was moved by photographs of the victims, including what he called 'beautiful babies'. Three days later US forces hit the Syrian airbase Shayrat, from which the chemical attack had been launched, with fifty-nine cruise missiles. Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev wrote on Facebook that the strike left the US 'on the verge of a military clash with Russia'.

Trump and Putin did not meet in person until the G-20 meeting in Hamburg on 7 July. They spoke for over two hours, and met again for a second private meeting. The contents of their discussions are not known. However, Trump's actions in Syria, his aggressive rhetoric in response to North Korea's missile tests, and his request to increase the Pentagon budget by $54 billion made the prospects for rapprochement with Russia seem remote.

KEY POINTS

- Donald Trump came to power promising to forge a new partnership with Russia.
- Trump's ability to formulate an effective foreign policy was stymied by administrative chaos and ideological confusion in the White House.
- Evidence emerged of Russian efforts to intervene in the US election in favour of Trump; and investigators examined whether Trump campaign officials had colluded with the Russian efforts.

Conclusion

In the 1990s and early 2000s Russia was a frustrated and impotent actor on the world stage, carping from the sidelines about US hegemony. But from 2008 the world saw a newly assertive Russia, willing to deploy military force in Georgia, Ukraine, and Syria, while also engaging in new forms of hybrid war, from the deployment of mercenaries in Donbas to hacking Democratic Party email servers in the US.

This new aggressiveness rests on several factors. The Russian economy doubled in size between 2000 and 2008, while spending on the military increased threefold between 2000 and 2015, from $28 billion to $91 billion. Putin's political regime shifted gear in 2011–14, moving from a technocratic autocracy to a regime based on populist nationalism. This was mainly a response to the protest movement that greeted Putin's return to the presidency in 2011–12. But it was also partly driven by external developments—the colour revolutions of 2003–05, followed by the Arab Spring of 2011, which were seen by the Kremlin as part of a US plan for 'regime change' in countries deemed hostile to US interests, including Russia itself.

The West did not know how to respond to this resurgent Russia. They tried diplomacy (Obama's abortive 'reset' of 2009); economic leverage (the targeted sanctions after the annexation of Crimea in 2014); and deterrence (stepping up NATO deployments to the Baltic region).

Meanwhile, other structural factors were at work: the 'decline of the West' and the rise of China. Europe never fully recovered from the 2008 financial crisis, and the breakdown in trust engendered by the Greek bailout was exacerbated by the flood of refugees across the Mediterranean from North Africa and Syria (via Turkey), peaking at more than a million in 2015.

The election of Barack Obama in 2008 raised US prestige in the world, but Obama's policy of military withdrawal in Iraq and Afghanistan, followed by inaction in Syria, signalled that the US was stepping back from its role as a global leader. Hamstrung by a hostile Congress, Obama was unable to move forward on key issues in his global agenda, such as climate change. His vaunted 'pivot to Asia' was met by a new Chinese assertiveness—building naval bases in the South China Sea.

This left an opening for Putin to reassert Russia's presence on the global stage, through a mixture of military force and the projection of Putin's image as an effective leader. Putin needed an assertive foreign policy to maintain his domestic legitimacy—especially with a presidential election upcoming in 2018. So he could not afford to step back from the positions he had staked out in Syria and Ukraine.

Since 1991, US policy towards Russia has cycled between exaggerated optimism and wary dismissal (see Controversies 14.3). The same cycle was repeated twice: through the liberal idealism of the Clinton administration; and then through the realism of the post-9/11 Bush administration. The USA was slow to recognize the extent of Russia's decline in the 1990s, then slow to recognize its rise after 1999. The USA failed to transform Russia into a trusty and reliable strategic partner. But that had probably been an unrealistic goal.

CONTROVERSIES 14.3: A NEW COLD WAR?

We are now experiencing a new Cold War between Russia and the US

Yes: With Russian-backed forces fighting in Ukraine and Syria, the risks of clashes with the US military are higher than at any time since the original Cold War.

No: There is no serious ideological disagreement between the two sides; they have common interests in securing peace and prosperity for their countries.

There is hope of improved relations in the near future

Yes: Putin is a practical, predictable leader whose demands for security guarantees are reasonable.

No: By interfering in the 2016 US presidential election Putin has shown he is unreliable and hostile; improved relations with the West will have to wait until after he leaves the Kremlin.

QUESTIONS

1. What were the priorities for US foreign policy during the break-up of the Soviet Union?
2. Was it wise for President Bill Clinton to tie US policy so closely to the figure of Boris Yeltsin?
3. How realistic were US expectations that post-Soviet Russia could have become a liberal democratic state? With benefit of hindsight, what could have been done differently to make that outcome more likely?
4. Was it a good idea for the USA to pursue NATO expansion over Russian objections?
5. What should US policy towards Russia have been after the rise to power of President Vladimir Putin?
6. What are the areas of common interests and conflicting interests between Russia and the United States?
7. Who is to blame for the war in Ukraine, and what steps can the United States take to resolve the conflict?
8. Are Russia and the USA now in a new Cold War?
9. How have US–Russia relations been affected by the rise of China?
10. Have domestic political and ideological battles within the US undermined the prospects for a realistic and effective US policy towards Russia?

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15

US foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific

Feng Zhang

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Introduction

Most discussions on United States foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific region (see Figure 15.1) begin with the end of the Second World War. That is indeed a natural choice. The United States emerged from that war victorious and hegemonic, becoming, alongside the Soviet Union, one of the world's two superpowers. It faced the historic task of rebuilding a world order shattered by two world wars and numerous other conflicts over the previous thirty years. In the Asia-Pacific, the challenge of order building was no less daunting than in Europe. The legacy of European colonialism, Japanese imperialism, devastating wars, and rising nationalist aspirations combined together to make for an explosive situation.

But American interests in the Asia-Pacific long predated the Second World War, and can be traced as far back as the founding years of the US republic. As American power grew in the nineteenth century, so did its commercial, religious, and strategic interests in Asia. Around the time of the Spanish-American War of 1898, which marked the arrival of the United States as a world power, US officials began to develop a historic policy of maintaining an 'Open Door' toward China that would characterize the US approach to East Asia until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. The Open Door policy was significant because it reflected America's rise as an Asian power while establishing the principle of ensuring US access to Asia by preventing its domination by a hostile power. Over a century later, that strategic doctrine—preventing the emergence of a dominating hegemon in Asia—still guides US policy today.

Figure 15.1 Map of the Asia-Pacific.

This chapter begins its discussion of US foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific by explaining the rise of America as an Asian power and the introduction of the Open Door policy that came to underpin US policy for almost half a century (1899–1941). This first phase of America's Asia policy came to an end with the conclusion of the Second World War, when the United States achieved maritime hegemony in the Asia-Pacific. The historic policy of Open Door was rendered irrelevant by American preponderance. The outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 prompted the United States to aggressively apply the containment doctrine in Asia, as it had already done in Europe, by establishing the so-called 'hub-and-spokes' bilateral alliance system. Soon, Washington's expansive security commitments and an obsession with strategic resolve led to the disastrous Vietnam War. The Richard Nixon–Henry Kissinger opening to China in the early 1970s had the broad purpose of widening US strategic options by bringing China into a 'triangular diplomacy' with the Soviet Union, but it was also motivated by the search for an exit strategy from Vietnam. This chapter argues that America's Asia strategy during the Cold War can in fact be divided into two distinct phases: the age of unchallenged American hegemony (1945–69) and the

search for partnerships, especially with China, to contain the Soviet Union (1970–89).

The post–Cold War era has witnessed a reassertion of American hegemony as the demise of the Soviet Union elevated the United States to the position of the sole superpower in a unipolar era. Successive administrations from George H. W. Bush senior to Barack Obama have continued the pursuit of regional hegemony by consolidating the US presence in Asia through enhanced military, diplomatic, and economic engagement. The Obama administration's strategy of rebalance to the Asia-Pacific was simply the latest manifestation of this hegemonic strategy.

If this reassertion of American hegemony constitutes the third phase of America's Asia policy, a question of fundamental importance for the future Asian order is whether the Donald Trump administration will carry on the historic post–Second World War strategy of preserving America's regional hegemony or will instead adopt a more isolationist strategy of retrenchment. The last section of this chapter briefly presents the uncertainties surrounding the future role of the United States in the Asia-Pacific by looking back at America's Asia strategies in the past. The US will not retain its preponderant power and influence held during the first half of the Cold War or the first decade after the end of Cold War. Above all else, China's rise is going to pose a severe test to US dominance. Nevertheless, the United States is likely to remain a key actor in the Asia-Pacific for a long time to come, as it has become an integral part of the Asian order after more than a century of involvement and entanglement.

Open Door for access and balance

American interests in the Asia-Pacific date back almost to the founding years of the US. America's first merchant ship—the *Empress of China*—reached the southern Chinese port of Canton (now called Guangzhou) in 1784. Thomas Jefferson, a 'Founding Father' and the third president (in office 1801–9), envisioned American expansion to the Pacific Ocean as part of his 'empire for liberty'. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, as American power grew, and as the concept of 'Manifest Destiny' implied American expansion as God's will, Washington increasingly staked out its interests in numerous Pacific islands and in the Asian mainland, especially China, Japan, and Korea.

The Spanish–American War

The Spanish–American War of 1898 dramatically asserted America's expansive—and imperial—interests in the Asia-Pacific and marked its arrival as a world power. Using the mysterious explosion of the battleship USS *Maine* in Havana harbour as a pretext, the United States scored an easy victory over the crumbling Spanish empire, forced Madrid to liquidate its vast colonial holdings from Latin America to Asia, and took control of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. In the same year, Washington annexed Hawaii and seized Guam. Hawaii and Guam now serve as America's major military bases in the Pacific, and the Philippines remains a key US ally in the region.

At the time of the Spanish–American War, US policy in the Asia-Pacific was based on three intersecting sets of interests: commercial, religious, and strategic. Commerce and trade, dating back to the 1780s, were the earliest driving force behind American involvement in Asia. Christian missionaries, threatened by science and secularism at home, undertook to proselytize in what they considered to be the world's richest market for evangelicalism. Meanwhile, American leaders came to realize that these interests required the protection of a powerful navy and, in combination, the possession of strategic points in the Pacific Ocean to support such a navy. Thus, Hawaii and Guam held strategic significance as military bases en route to Asia, while the Philippines offered both strategic and commercial values in providing naval bases and a new market, as well as a gateway to the fabled China market.

Once the conflict with Spain ended, American attention turned to the Asian mainland, especially China. For half a century, the United States had joined the European powers in demanding concessions and special rights in China. But when China appeared to be on the brink of being divided into exclusive spheres of influence by the great powers at the end of the nineteenth century, Washington felt it necessary to intervene to safeguard its interests. In September 1899, Secretary of State John Hay issued the first Open Door Note to the great powers, urging them not to discriminate against the commerce of other nations within their spheres of influence. The second Open Door Note, issued in July 1900, affirmed Washington's intention to preserve China's territorial and administrative integrity and safeguard the principle of equal and impartial trade with all parts of China.

The Open Door policy of 1899–1900

The Open Door policy of 1899–1900 held historic significance in America's Asia policy. If the Spanish–American War of 1898 and earlier American forays into the Asia-Pacific asserted American interests in the region, the Open Door policy demonstrated America's self-awareness as an independent Asian power with special responsibilities. The original purpose of the Open Door Notes was to protect freedom of trade and maintain access to the China market, a selfish goal at odds with the lofty declaration of safeguarding Chinese sovereignty. It in fact legitimized foreign competition over China and led to military intervention and colonial positioning (LaFeber 2013: 168). But it was also compatible with—and indeed inspired—the larger strategic objective of preventing the domination of Asia by a hostile power, an objective that would characterize American policy up to the present day. Before 1945, the United States tried to achieve that objective by playing balance-of-power politics among the great powers in Asia, but was on the whole unsuccessful.

The mediation of President Theodore Roosevelt (in office 1901–9) in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5 was a classic case in point. The war broke out as a result of the simmering rivalry between the two countries over spheres of influence in Manchuria and Korea, and Japan stunned the world by destroying the Russian fleet at Tsushima in May 1905. Initially respectful of Japanese prowess, Roosevelt grew concerned about a Japanese hegemony in Asia that would threaten US interests. He thus offered to mediate between the belligerents in the hope of preserving a balance of power in Asia. The resulting Treaty of Portsmouth, signed in September 1905, earned him the 1906 Nobel Peace Prize, making him the first American to be so honoured. But apart from an indemnity, this treaty gave Japan almost all that it wanted and made it the most powerful country in Northeast Asia, thus damaging rather than enhancing the balance of power in the region.

Losing balance (1909–1945)

The US presidential administrations of William Howard Taft (1909–13) and Woodrow Wilson (1913–21) were China-friendly in attitude, but did not succeed in strengthening China or checking rising Japan expansionism. Taft sought to use private US capital to thwart Japanese expansion and bolster the independence of China. Indeed, many Chinese saw the United States as a useful counterweight against Russia and Japan. But this 'dollar diplomacy' failed because of opposition from other great powers and because of internal Chinese disorder. Wilson responded enthusiastically to the Chinese Revolution of 1911 that toppled the Manchu dynasty, but he rejected Chinese pleas for US support in resisting ever more threatening Japanese expansion. Wilson's reputation suffered a damaging blow when, at the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919, he conceded to the Japanese demand of keeping the Chinese province of Shandong, which they had seized from Germany in 1914. This concession dashed China's hope of ending great-power domination and laid bare the hypocrisy of Wilson's principle of national self-determination.

Republican administrations following Wilson tried to preserve the balance of power and promote stability in East Asia without political or military entanglements. They often used private businesses as their instruments to promote economic development in China, so as to help protect its sovereignty as well as expand US trade. Deterred by the risks of investing in unstable areas of the country under Chinese rule, however, the bankers turned instead to Japanese-controlled areas that were more stable, and in effect facilitated Japanese expansion in the Asian mainland (Herring 2008: 468).

One area in which the United States did achieve notable progress was international arms control. At the Washington naval conference of 1921–2, called upon by the administration of US president Warren G. Harding (1921–3) to address rising tensions in the Asia-Pacific, the great powers reached a series of agreements to impose arms control and stabilize competition over China. But they refused to address China's unequal treaties that they had imposed since the mid-nineteenth century, and in fact implicitly recognized Japan's special rights in Manchuria. Western powers now recognized Japan as a major power and gave it another concession. In freezing the status quo rather than alleviating the inequities under which China suffered, the Washington conference whetted Japan's imperial ambitions in Asia, even as it eased tensions in the short run.

The United States' refusal to stand up to Japanese aggression—and thus its failure to preserve the Asian balance of power—was in full display in the Manchurian crisis of 1931–2. Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson viewed the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in September 1931 as a threat to world order and considered imposing economic sanctions. But in the face of President Herbert Hoover's (1929–33) opposition,

Stimson resorted to moral opprobrium—rather than economic sanctions or military actions—to rally world opinion against Japan. Stimson's words prevented neither the Japanese takeover of Manchuria nor Tokyo's full-scale invasion of China in 1937. Japan was clearly the rising and menacing hegemon in Asia, yet the United States did nothing substantive to prevent such a hostile Japanese hegemony.

The administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933–45) stood aloof after the Japanese invasion of China in 1937, not even willing to consider economic sanctions. As Japanese forces bogged down in the vastness of China, and as Washington prepared for war with Germany in Europe, however, tensions with Japan rose sharply and American sympathy for China soared. A pivotal point came in the summer of 1940, when Japan announced a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, making clear its intention to establish hegemony in East and Southeast Asia. That goal came into sharp conflict with Washington's vision for regional order, based as it was on the Open Door policy of equal access for all the great powers rather than the hegemony of one single power. Japanese control over the strategically vital Southeast Asian region would also adversely affect allied war efforts in Europe. Washington began to increase trade restrictions on Tokyo. When it finally imposed an embargo on oil, an indispensable resource for the Japanese war machine, Tokyo responded with a surprise attack on Hawaii's Pearl Harbor naval base in December 1941. US–Japan rivalry, and the larger question of East Asian order, would now have to be resolved by the bloodiest war America had yet seen.

KEY POINTS

- The Spanish American War of 1898 dramatically asserted America's expansive—and imperial—interests in the Asia-Pacific and marked its arrival as a world power.
- America's historic policy of Open Door toward China was meant to protect its commercial interests in China by warning the other great powers against partitioning China and establishing discriminative trade policies. It was not an altruistic commitment to safeguarding China's territorial sovereignty and integrity.
- In failing to stand up to Japanese expansion and aggression from the 1910s to the 1930s, the United States failed to achieve its strategic objective of preventing hegemony in Asia. US–Japan rivalry, and the larger question of East Asian order, was ultimately resolved by the Pacific War of 1941–5.

From hegemony to partnerships

At the end of the Second World War, the United States emerged, along with the Soviet Union, as one of the two superpowers in world politics. In the Pacific theatre, following Japan's surrender in August 1945, it stood as the virtually unchallenged hegemon (see Key quotes 15.1), commanding a naval supremacy that far overshadowed the Soviet Union's land-based continental hegemony in northern Asia. The historic policy of Open Door was no longer needed because American maritime hegemony, in rendering the balance of power inoperative, guaranteed American and allied access to the region.

KEY QUOTES 15.1: AMERICA'S RISE AS AN ASIA-PACIFIC POWER

We, more than any other Power, are to have the Pacific trade—the trade with China and Japan (A New York business newspaper in 1894, quoted in LaFeber 2013: 96).

No war ever transformed us quite as the war with Spain transformed us (Woodrow Wilson in 1902, quoted in Herring 2008: 335).

For over a century—since the Open Door policy and Theodore Roosevelt's mediation of the Russo-Japanese War—it has been a fixed American policy to prevent hegemony in Asia (Kissinger 2014: 233).

In China, the United States supported Jiang Jieshi's (also known as Chiang Kai-shek) nationalist government in its civil war with the communists led by Mao Zedong. Shocked by the gross military incompetence of Jiang's forces, Washington watched the nationalists' defeat and the founding of the communist People's Republic of China (PRC) in October 1949 with dismay. Eager to extricate the US from the unfinished business of the Chinese civil war, the Harry S. Truman administration (1945–53) made it clear in January 1950 that the US would not defend Taiwan in the case of a communist invasion of the island, where the exiled nationalist government was now based. At this point, the administration was not viewing the PRC from a pure containment perspective. The US State Department's white paper on China, released in August 1949 as the Chinese civil war was coming to an end, accurately pointed out that the communist victory was the result

of deep-seated upheavals within the country. Leaving room for future policy flexibility, Secretary of State Dean Acheson even envisioned the prospect of recognizing the PRC before long, in part for the purpose of driving a wedge between China and the Soviet Union, the two communist colossuses in Asia.

Acheson played on the theme of Sino-Soviet differences during his famous National Press Club speech of January 1950. But the speech was even more significant because of its clarification of America's defence commitments in the Asia-Pacific and its underlying assumption of American military hegemony in the region. Acheson described an American defence perimeter running from the Aleutians southward through Japan, Okinawa, and the Philippines. That such a defence perimeter could be defined attested to his belief in American hegemony in the Pacific. Acheson also apparently assumed that this hegemony was so robust that it would be impractical for any country to challenge the security of other areas in the region. He did not include the Korean peninsula, by then divided along the 38th parallel by Soviet and American occupation forces at the end of the Pacific War, or Taiwan, the base of the exiled Republic of China government led by Jiang Jieshi, in his defence perimeter. Yet Korea proved to be of pivotal strategic significance not only for conflicts in Asia, but also for the global Cold War. In June 1950, North Korea, backed by the Soviet Union and China, invaded the South by crossing the 38th parallel. American forces intervened to roll back North Korean advances, while also imposing a blockade on the Taiwan Strait to forestall PRC attacks on Taiwan.

The Korean War

The Korean War produced massive consequences for US policy in Asia. It immediately confirmed Washington's fear about the existential threat of global communism emanating from Moscow and Beijing, and instigated a sense of urgency to apply the containment doctrine in Asia, as it was already doing in Europe. Determined to prevent another such war in the future, Washington expanded its defence perimeter to include not only Korea and Taiwan, but also almost wherever communist expansion might pose a direct threat to US interests, including, crucially for later developments, Southeast Asia. It was from this point that the United States saw itself as the security provider for its regional allies and the defender of the 'free world' in the Asia-Pacific against communist expansion.

As a consequence of the Korean War, Washington established a so-called 'hub-and-spokes' alliance system of bilateral security pacts, with the United States as the 'hub' and its regional allies as separate 'spokes', in the 1950s. The first mutual defence treaty was signed with its former colony, the Philippines, in August 1951, followed by a similar treaty with Australia and New Zealand one month later. In September 1951, the United States signed a peace treaty with Japan during the San Francisco peace conference, paving the way for ending American occupation of Japan in May 1952. On the same day that the treaty was signed, Japan and the United States signed a mutual security treaty to provide a demilitarized Japan with security protection. The American occupation was originally aimed at eliminating the vestiges of Japanese militarism. But it soon turned to rehabilitating Japan's economy and maintaining its political stability. After the outbreak of the Korean War, American policy changed radically from imposing pacifism on Japan to rearming it for containing the communist threat. Ever since 1951, the US–Japan alliance has been the cornerstone of the US-led security order in the Asia-Pacific. Elsewhere, in October 1953, two months after the armistice of the Korean War, the United States and South Korea signed a mutual defence treaty. In 1954, Thailand also became a treaty ally of the United States as part of the Manila Pact that led to the creation of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), headquartered in Bangkok.

SEATO, composed of the United States, the Philippines, Thailand, Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, and Pakistan, was an American attempt to deter the further expansion of communist influence in Southeast and South Asia, especially southern Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. It dissolved in 1977 because of its failure to attract major Asian countries such as Indonesia and India. There was thus no successful Asian multilateral security organization along the lines of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the West. Through the 'hub-and-spokes' bilateral alliance system, however, the United States consolidated a far-reaching network of military bases and facilities to support its strategy of containing communism in Asia. American hegemony in the Pacific was further buttressed by its bases in Guam, Hawaii, the Philippines, and the central and southern Pacific islands. An 'Iron Curtain' between US maritime hegemony in the Asia-Pacific and the Sino-Soviet land bloc had been established in Asia, as it had earlier in central Europe between US- and Soviet-led camps.

Open markets and 'hub-and-spokes'

By this point, two central pillars of America's strategy for maintaining hegemony in Asia had clearly emerged: American security guarantees and open markets. In the security domain, the 'hub-and-spokes' bilateral alliance system reflected a bargain whereby the United States provided security protection and access to American markets, technology, and resources within an open world economy while America's allies and partners provided support for US leadership (Ikenberry 2011: 208–9).

In the economic domain, America's commitment to open markets dates back to the Second World War, when the Roosevelt administration believed that protectionism was an underlying cause of the war and that America needed to promote an open world economy in order to safeguard post-war prosperity and security. Open markets would also serve America's self-interest of securing access to Asian markets and resources, creating employment at home and economic interdependence abroad. Such access, as we have seen, was the principal motive behind the historic Open Door policy during the opening phase of US policy in Asia. Then, as now, the access motive informed a strategy of preventing the domination of Asia by a hostile power. For many US officials, this anti-hegemony imperative required Washington itself to play a hegemonic—or, at least, leadership—role in the region.

But the cost of this containment-driven hegemonic strategy soon became clear. The Korean War made Washington allergic to any communist advances in Asia, however minor they were. Policymakers believed in the central importance of strategic commitment and resolve for ensuring the success of containment, and became willing to defend US credibility by opposing communist encroachments wherever possible. Thus, the expansion of Viet Minh communists from North Vietnam to the South led to the so-called domino theory in the 1950s and 1960s. The theory held that the loss of South Vietnam would lead to communist expansion in the rest of Southeast Asia; the loss of Southeast Asia would in turn damage the credibility of US commitments to containing communism in other parts of the world. The strategy of containment thus required drawing the line in Vietnam by rolling back the Viet Minh. In effect, such obsession with credibility led to an extraordinarily ambitious global strategy that saw almost no limit to the projection of American power (see Key quotes 15.2).

KEY QUOTES 15.2: RICHARD NED LEBOW ON AMERICAN OBSESSION WITH RESOLVE

The Americans considered resolve a prime requisite of security throughout the Cold War. Truman's gut reaction to Korea was that the communists were testing US resolve as Hitler had tested France and Britain. NSC-68 gave resolve coequal standing with military capability. Kennedy erroneously concluded that Khrushchev had deployed missiles in Cuba because he doubted his resolve. American intervention in Indochina, concern over an alleged 'window of vulnerability' in the early 1980s and later worries about the political consequences of a Soviet advantage in theater weapons systems reveal a continuing fixation on the question of resolve. So too did the Cold War literature on deterrence—which stressed credibility as key—and portrayed commitments as a seamless web in which resolve (or its absence) in any one commitment had serious implications for all others.

(Lebow 2010: 161)

The Vietnam War

The immediate consequence of such strategic thinking was the Vietnam War of 1964–73, widely seen as the most disastrous episode in the history of American foreign policy. Protracted, costly, and divisive, the Vietnam War not only drained American military and financial resources, but also rent American society as nothing had since the American Civil War of 1861–5. By the time Nixon became president in 1969, US officials had begun to look for an 'honourable' way of ending the war, even if that meant America's first major defeat in a foreign war. Recognizing the limits of American power, in a July 1969 speech in Guam, Nixon scaled down US security commitments by announcing that henceforth Asian nations would need to take responsibility for defending themselves while America would contribute offshore naval and air power as well as training and logistics. The Nixon Doctrine, as it became known,

marked the end of the era of unchallenged American hegemony in Asia and, in combination with the opening to China, signalled the beginning of a new era of seeking partnerships for maintaining a favourable balance of power.

The Nixon–Kissinger opening to China was in part motivated by the search for an 'honourable' exit from Vietnam, in addition to a new strategic option for containing the Soviet Union. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, largely as a consequence of the Korean War, the United States had not only sought to contain China militarily, but also isolated it politically, diplomatically, and economically. Although the Truman administration was initially ambivalent about the PRC, the Korean War ended all ambiguities and led to an American strategic vision of the Asia-Pacific along a sharp ideological line between communist and non-communist countries. Truman's decision to blockade the Taiwan Strait prevented a military takeover of Taiwan by the PRC. Washington also recognized the Nationalist government in Taiwan—rather than the PRC government in Beijing—as the legitimate government of China with a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. Many American officials saw the PRC as the greatest danger to Asia-Pacific security.

American assessments finally changed when the Nixon administration, National Security Advisor Kissinger in particular, came to recognize the escalating rivalry between China and the Soviet Union (including border conflicts in 1969 and a possible Soviet attack on China's nuclear installations) and the strategic opportunities presented by an opening to China. Kissinger's secret trip to Beijing in July 1971 paved the way for Nixon's historic visit in February 1972—the first visit to China by a serving US president. This opening to China helped to facilitate America's exit from the Vietnam quagmire. Nixon wanted Chinese leaders to apply pressure over North Vietnam's positions in its negotiations with America. He also expected Beijing to reduce substantial aid to Hanoi, without which the North Vietnamese would have had great difficulty in sustaining the war. China's attempts to improve relations with the United States angered North Vietnam, but were beneficial to America. Washington and Hanoi finally reached a compromise deal in January 1973, after 55,000 Americans and millions of Vietnamese had perished in the war.

KEY POINTS

- America's Asia strategy during the Cold War can be divided into two distinct phases: the age of unchallenged American hegemony (1945–69) and the search for partnerships to contain the Soviet Union (1970–89).
- The Korean War prompted the United States to aggressively apply the containment doctrine in Asia, including establishing a 'hub-and-spokes' bilateral alliance system.
- US officials believed in the central importance of strategic commitment and resolve for ensuring the success of containment. Expansive security commitments and an obsession with strategic resolve eventually led to the disastrous Vietnam War.
- The Nixon–Kissinger opening to China was in part motivated by the search for an exit strategy from the Vietnam quagmire, in addition to a new strategic option for containing the Soviet Union. It was a historic event that broadened strategic options for both the United States and China and significantly affected the subsequent development of the Cold War.

The end of the Vietnam War could hardly disguise the massive failure of US policy in Southeast Asia. Washington lost in a guerrilla war waged by North Vietnam and was further humiliated by Hanoi's conquest of Saigon in April 1975. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam was unified in July 1976, and Hanoi demonstrated a hegemonic ambition for the entire Indochinese region by invading Cambodia and Laos. The United States, having just disengaged itself from the region, could only watch those events on the sidelines, while assisting China in countering Vietnam's—and its ally the Soviet Union's—regional ambitions. When Beijing launched a punitive attack into northern Vietnam in February 1979, Washington quietly provided intelligence support, demonstrating the operation of the US–China quasi-alliance based on a common anti-Soviet imperative.

These events demonstrated that the opening to China and the end of the Vietnam War heralded a new era of America's Asia policy in which strategic partnerships and alliances, rather than single-handed military hegemony, became the primary means for achieving foreign policy objectives. The Vietnam War put to rest the myth of American invincibility and ended the military phase of the containment

policy in Asia. Containing Soviet power was still the overriding strategic objective, but Washington sought to realize it more through diplomacy and foreign aid, as in Indochina against Vietnam after the late 1970s and in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union in the 1980s following the Soviet invasion of that country.

In Europe, the Cold War ended in 1989 with the collapse of the Soviet Union's Eastern European empire. In the Asia-Pacific, however, Moscow appeared to have lost the strategic competition by the 1970s, as the realignment of China from the Soviet to the American side helped to transform the region's strategic landscape. From the end of the Vietnam War in 1973 to the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, US strategy aimed at balancing Soviet power and preventing its Asian hegemony, while forgoing its own drive for hegemony. China contributed to this strategic goal through its quasi-alliance with Washington, even though the Soviet Union's self-inflicted quagmire in Afghanistan and the Ronald Reagan administration's (1981–9) massive arms build-up for challenging Soviet power and resolve reduced its strategic significance.

The reassertion of American hegemony

With the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States emerged victorious from the Cold War and became the sole superpower in what realist scholars refer to as a unipolar era (see Key quotes 15.3). But the end of the Cold War produced paradoxical effects on regional politics in the Asia-Pacific. On the one hand, as in Europe, the replacement of the Soviet Union by a much weaker Russia greatly enhanced America's power and status and rekindled its quest for hegemony. On the other hand, regional fault lines created during the early years of the Cold War persisted into the new era. China, North Korea, Vietnam, and Laos remained socialist states and were hostile to liberal democratic political systems championed by the West. A cold war continued to plague the Korean peninsula divided between the North and the South. The Taiwan Strait remained a flashpoint as Beijing held out the threat of military unification should Taipei declare de jure independence.

KEY QUOTES 15.3: AMERICAN HEGEMONY IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC

American hegemony in East Asia is organized around a 'hub-and-spoke' security system of client states (Ikenberry 2011: 27).

The Vietnam War, a direct by-product of the Cold War, divided Americans as nothing had since their civil war a century earlier, and the divisions persisted into the next century (Herring 2008: 915).

Nixon's visit to China is one of the few occasions where a state visit brought about a seminal change in international affairs. The reentry of China into the global diplomatic game, and the increased strategic options for the United States, gave a new vitality and flexibility to the international system (Kissinger 2011: 273).

The end of the Cold War did, however, produce a major change in US–China relations. The relationship was already rocked by China's crackdown on student demonstrations at Tiananmen Square on 4 June 1989. The George H. W. Bush administration (1989–93), along with many Western governments and Japan, imposed sanctions, including an arms embargo, on Beijing, plunging the relationship into a nadir not seen since the 1972 Nixon visit to China. But even without the Tiananmen crackdown, the relationship would probably still have gone downhill since the *raison d'être* of the two countries' strategic cooperation during the Cold War—containing the Soviet threat—had disappeared. Instead, as the United States reasserted its hegemony, it increasingly came to regard China as a peer competitor and the next contender for hegemony in Asia. The US–China relationship grew considerably more complex and became one of the defining factors of regional politics in the post–Cold War era.

The end of the Cold War did not change the fundamental principle of America's Asia policy, predicated on ensuring access to the region by preventing the rise of a hostile hegemon. The twin strategic pillars of providing security guarantee to its allies and maintaining an open regional economy were also firmly in place. But different administrations held different policy priorities, had different strategic visions for Asia, and differed especially over China policy.

The Clinton administration

The Bill Clinton administration (1993–2001) took office promising to reorient American grand strategy

from military security abroad to economic prosperity at home. This new strategic vision alarmed Japan. Although Tokyo was Washington's closest ally in Asia, it had also been running persistent trade deficits with America. Clinton's economic reorientation threatened to open a trade war with Japan and damage the US–Japan alliance. Due to a series of developments, however, this alliance came to be continuously strengthened by successive post–Cold War US administrations from Clinton to George W. Bush to Obama. The first North Korean nuclear crisis of 1993–4 convinced the Clinton administration that North Korea was a rogue regime and a major source of instability in Northeast Asia. Reversing its earlier economy-centred strategy, the administration began to prioritize security issues over economic relations. In 1994–5, the Pentagon launched a major initiative to strengthen the US–Japan alliance, in an attempt to reassure allies and warn potential adversaries about American commitment to the region. Rather than withdrawing, Washington pledged to maintain at least 100,000 US forces in East Asia. In 1997, Japan revised its defence guidelines and committed itself to rear-area support to the United States in logistics and intelligence sharing and non-combat operations. Alongside the consolidation of the US–Japan alliance, Washington also strengthened defence ties with Singapore, Australia, and the Philippines.

One year after the North Korean nuclear crisis, the Clinton administration found itself confronting another crisis, this time with China over the Taiwan Strait. The crisis started when the administration granted President Lee Teng-hui of Taiwan a visa to revisit Cornell University in New York State, where he had been a student, violating an earlier pledge to Beijing that it would not issue such a visa. Worse from Beijing's perspective, Lee's speech at Cornell called for Taiwan to assert its political independence. Beijing retaliated with three rounds of military exercises from July 1995 to March 1996, while building up 100,000 forces in the Nanjing Military District, directly across the Taiwan Strait from Taiwan. This prompted President Clinton to send two aircraft carrier battle groups to the Taiwan Strait, and the Chinese ended their exercises shortly afterwards.

The Taiwan Strait crisis of 1995–6 strengthened Washington's belief, already strong following the North Korean nuclear crisis, that it must reinforce its security posture in East Asia and revitalize the alliance with Japan. But it also had a profound impact on China. Humiliated by the lack of options for responding to the US deployment of carrier battle groups, Chinese military planners were determined to accelerate military modernization and develop doctrines and capabilities to counter future US interventions. Today, more than two decades later, China has developed powerful capabilities in what the Pentagon refers to as anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) that are posing increasing risks to US interventions.

On the economic front, the Clinton administration actively promoted globalization, open trade, and economic interdependence in the wider Asia-Pacific region. Although the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum—the region's main intergovernmental vehicle for economic cooperation—was initially proposed by Australia in 1989, the Clinton administration gave it full support by convening the first leaders' meeting in 1993. Another turning point in regional economic integration came in 2001, when China entered the World Trade Organization (WTO) after an arduous process of negotiation with the United States. WTO accession ushered in a new phase of China's integration into the regional and global economy.

The post–Cold War era also witnessed a new round of multilateral institution-building in Asia, especially in Southeast Asia. Ironically, it was the American withdrawal from Southeast Asia after the Vietnam War that facilitated regional institution-building. The most important institution, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), was formed by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand in 1967 and subsequently expanded to incorporate all the remaining Southeast Asian states (Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam). In the 1990s, ASEAN-centred regional institutions, particularly the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN+1 (including China), ASEAN+3 (including China, Japan, and South Korea), and ASEAN-related free trade agreements, took centre stage in the region's institutional structure. The ARF, in particular, played an important role in integrating China into the region in a constructive way. Focusing on its bilateral 'hub-and-spokes' alliance system, the United States was historically ambivalent about regional multilateralism and suspicious of such regional initiatives' potential to undermine US leadership. The Clinton administration gave rhetorical support to multilateralism, but in practice did not invest much other than in APEC.

The G. W. Bush administration

The George W. Bush administration (2001–9) came to office fully committed to maintaining America's unparalleled hegemony in the Asia-Pacific. But in contrast to the Democratic Clinton administration's liberal proclivities, the new Republican administration took a more conservative and hard-line view toward international politics. Realist in orientation, administration officials had early on labelled China a 'strategic competitor' and next on the list to be suppressed as a hegemonic challenger to US preponderance. The Bush team criticized Clinton's strategy of engaging China and integrating it into the regional and international society as too soft. The anchor of the new administration's more assertive Asia policy was the further strengthening of the US-led alliance system, especially the alliance with Japan, as a counterweight to rising Chinese power. India was for the first time solicited as an additional partner in achieving a favourable balance of power for US hegemony, and the intention of using India to check China—both big rising powers in Asia—was apparent to Beijing. Washington also took a more sympathetic view toward Taiwan by promising to improve the island's defensive capabilities through robust arms sales.

Less than three months into his presidency, however, President Bush confronted the reality of the US–China relationship after a mid-air collision between an American surveillance aircraft and a Chinese fighter jet near China's southern coast in April 2001. This crisis was only resolved after the US side expressed regret about the incident that the Chinese side took as an apology (see Box 15.1). To make matters worse, in the same month, the Bush administration offered Taiwan a very large arms sale package while pledging to 'do whatever it takes' to help Taiwan defend itself. US–PRC relations regressed to their worst level since the May 1999 US bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade during the Kosovo War (Christensen 2015: 205).

BOX 15.1: THE APRIL 2001 US–CHINA AIR COLLISION CRISIS

On 1 April 2001, an American EP-3 surveillance plane and an intercepting Chinese F-8 fighter jet collided over the South China Sea off China's Hainan Island. The US crew survived the accident and made an emergency landing of their damaged plane onto a Chinese military airfield on Hainan Island. China detained the twenty-four crew members for eleven days. The Chinese F-8 crashed into the sea and its pilot was presumed dead.

China and the United States each blamed the other for the incident. The US side asserted that the EP-3 plane was flying over 'international waters' and thus was entitled to freedom of navigation and overflight. It accused the Chinese pilot of causing the collision by attempting to impress or intimidate the EP-3 crew. China, on the other hand, did not acknowledge the US term 'international waters' and regarded the long-standing US surveillance as a threat to its national security. It therefore demanded that the United States bear full responsibility and stop reconnaissance flights in the airspace along China's coast.

For releasing the American crew and returning the damaged EP-3 plane, Beijing demanded an official apology from the US government. Washington did not apologize, but senior officials from President Bush to Secretary of State Colin Powell to the US ambassador to China Joseph Prueher expressed 'regret' over the incident. China took this expression as 'apology' and allowed the twenty-four US crew to fly out of Hainan on 12 April. Beijing only agreed to return the plane, in a disassembled form, to the United States on 29 May. Believing that it had not done anything wrong, the US military swiftly resumed surveillance flights against China, and China as usual scrambled its jets to intercept and monitor US missions.

The relationship took a positive turn after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington underscored the two countries' common interests in combating terrorism. Beijing subsequently acquiesced in the Bush administration's global war on terror, including military initiatives in China's western backyard of South and Central Asia. Despite the general improvement of the relationship, the Taiwan challenge remained. President Chen Shui-bian of the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party sought populist means such as public referendums to legalize Taiwan's permanent separation from mainland China. The Bush administration, mindful of the risk of war should Chen go to the brink, actively opposed Chen's unilateral actions to change the status quo. Much to the relief of both Beijing and Washington, the victory of the Nationalist Party's Ma Ying-jeou as the new president in the March 2008 election

restored stability to the Taiwan Strait. Ma rejected independence and sought to improve relations with the mainland by enhancing economic links between the two sides. Turbulence across the Taiwan Strait during the Bush years finally came to a close.

Thus, after a rocky start in 2001, the Bush administration managed to achieve stability in its relations with China. But it was not a simple return to the Clinton administration's strategy of engaging China. Engagement aside, the administration simultaneously sought to rigorously balance Chinese power and prevent Beijing from achieving an alleged hegemony in Asia. US officials accepted China's rise and did not aim to contain it, but they devised a strategy to dissuade China from making a bid for hegemony and thereby to preserve America's own hegemony in the region. This hegemonic strategy required both engaging China so as not to antagonize it and consolidating a US presence in Asia through enhanced military capabilities and a strengthened alliance network (Silove 2016). Such an assertive strategy was essentially carried over into the Barack Obama administration (2009–17) through the 'pivot' or 'rebalance' strategy.

North Korea also occupied a prominent place in the Bush administration's Asia policy, but the outcome was disappointing for all sides involved in the Korean peninsula except North Korea itself. In January 2002 President Bush listed North Korea as a member of the 'axis of evil' alongside Iran and Iraq. Late in the year US officials discovered that North Korea was pursuing highly enriched uranium production for its nuclear weapons program. In response to US accusations of its violation of earlier agreements on nuclear non-proliferation, Pyongyang withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and in early 2003 began processing spent fuel rods at the Yongbyon nuclear facility. Thus began a new round of the North Korean nuclear crisis. With the help of China as the host for the so-called Six-Party Talks involving Japan, South Korea, and Russia as well, Washington ran a series of negotiations with Pyongyang from 2003 to 2009. But it failed to achieve the stated objective of denuclearization. Since October 2006, North Korea has conducted five nuclear tests, with the fourth test in January 2016 claimed as thermonuclear. US officials blame North Korean obstreperousness for the failure and have all but lost interest in reopening negotiations with Pyongyang following the unsuccessful conclusion of the Six-Party Talks.

KEY POINTS

- After the Cold War, the replacement of the Soviet Union by a much weaker Russia greatly enhanced America's power and status and rekindled its quest for hegemony.
- The US–Japan alliance was continuously strengthened by successive post–Cold War administrations from Clinton to Bush to Obama.
- The US–China relationship went through several crises during the Clinton and Bush administrations, including the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1995–96, the Belgrade embassy bombing of 1999, and the April 2001 EP-3 collision incident. But the United States managed to stabilize the relationship by engaging China while also balancing its rising power.
- Despite efforts to negotiate with North Korea over its nuclear weapons program through the China-hosted Six-Party Talks, North Korea has conducted five nuclear tests since October 2006 and is now a nuclear-weapons state in all but name.

The rebalance to the Asia-Pacific

In October 2011, President Obama's Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced a 'pivot' to the Asia-Pacific region in a prominent article published in *Foreign Policy*, reaffirming America's strong commitment to continued regional leadership (Clinton 2011). One month later, Obama echoed this 'pivot' message in a speech to the Australian parliament (Obama 2011). In January 2012, the Department of Defense released a strategic blueprint for the Joint Force in 2020, using the word 'rebalance' to describe the US military's reorientation toward Asia (United States Department of Defense 2012: 2). By that point, the 'pivot' or 'rebalance' toward the Asia-Pacific had become the Obama administration's settled Asian strategy (see Key quotes 15.4).

KEY QUOTES 15.4: REBALANCING

The lesson of [the resolution of the Taiwan Strait crisis in] 1996 is not that the United States requires a tougher China policy, but that its policymakers must avoid the mistakes of 1995 to prevent similar costly and unnecessary confrontations in the future.

(Ross 2000: 90)

> The major challenge in US policy toward relations across the Taiwan Strait is to achieve two somewhat contradictory goals at once: on the one hand, Washington needs to maintain a strong enough regional military presence and support for Taiwan's defense to discourage the mainland from coercing or invading the island; on the other hand, the United States needs to reassure Beijing that the purpose of its arms sales and military presence is not to support the permanent legal separation of Taiwan from the Chinese nation (often shorthanded as 'Taiwan independence').
>
> *(Christensen 2015: 190)*
>
> By 2004, the Bush administration had planned a military-diplomatic reorientation toward Asia. The goal of the reorientation was … to prevent China from challenging the United States for superiority in Asia.
>
> *(Silove 2016: 66–7)*

As mentioned above, the Obama administration's strategy of rebalancing to Asia had important origins in the preceding Bush administration's strategic reorientation to Asia that was formulated around the mid-2000s. The rebalance strategy had three major components: military, diplomatic, and economic.

Military rebalance

In the military domain, the Bush administration had begun the process of expanding bases on US territories adjacent to Asia in Guam, Alaska, and Hawaii. The Obama administration announced a plan to move 60 per cent of its naval and air forces to the Asia-Pacific, including the latest and most advanced weapons systems in the US arsenal. It planned to deploy 2500 Marines to Australia and rotate troops through five military bases in the Philippines. It also enhanced existing defence relationships with Singapore and signed new defence agreements with Vietnam and India. Moreover, the Pentagon began to develop new military doctrines from the Air–Sea Battle (later renamed Joint Concept for Access and Maneuver in the Global Commons) to the Third Offset Strategy directed above all at China. The United States had already stationed 50,000 troops in Asia (down from the 100,000 post–Cold War peak). These moves under the rebalance strategy amounted to a doubling of an already robust military presence in the region. They appeared threatening to an anxious China that was always suspicious of US strategic intentions in Asia.

A significant novelty in US military strategy was the revision of America's traditional 'hub-and-spokes' bilateral alliance system into a network structure encouraging US allies and partners to develop stronger military relationships and greater interoperability with one another. This transformation of the US-led security order in Asia was already apparent during the second G. W. Bush administration (2005–9), but it became especially pronounced during the Obama rebalance. The Obama administration continued to increase the military capabilities of and build stronger bilateral interoperability with allies and partners. But the new network approach to alliance, as reflected in various 'minilateral' security institutions such as the failed quadrilateral security dialogue among the United States, Japan, India, and Australia in 2007 and the more successful trilateral dialogue among the United States, Japan, and Australia, may ultimately be more instrumental in shaping the future Asian security order. Kurt M. Campbell, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs during the first Obama administration (2009–13) and the chief architect behind the 'pivot', argues that this strategy promotes adding to the traditional hub-and-spokes model of a tyre that links allies to one another without interfering with their strong ties to the US hub (Campbell 2016: 205–6; see Key quotes 15.5).

KEY QUOTES 15.5: KURT M. CAMPBELL ON THE PIVOT/REBALANCE STRATEGY

> The Pivot is premised on the idea that the Asia-Pacific region not only increasingly defines global power and commerce, but also welcomes US leadership and rewards US engagement with positive returns on political, economic, and military investments (Campbell 2016: 1).
>
> [T]he United States should pursue a comprehensive and flexible strategy in Asia, backed by top-level attention and adequate resources, with the aim of fulfilling its traditional post–World War II role in the region, keeping credible its alliance commitments, and sustaining Asia's 'operating system' (the complex legal, security, and practical arrangements that have underscored four decades of prosperity and security). Such a strategy will require that we move away from the kind of 'China first' or 'G-2' approach that has often dominated US policy toward Asia and will instead involve embedding China strategy in a larger regional framework, one that advances relations with countries across the region, including China. … [T]he chief pillars of such an integrative strategy should include bolstering traditional alliances, forging new partnerships, engaging regional institutions, diversifying military forces, defending democratic values, embracing economic statecraft, and developing a truly multifaceted and comprehensive approach to an increasingly assertive and capable China (Campbell 2016: 7).

Diplomacy rebalance

On the diplomatic front, the United States has significantly enhanced its diplomatic and strategic relations with crucial Asia-Pacific countries including both its traditional allies and its new security partners. In Northeast Asia, the April 2015 upgrade of the Guidelines for Japan–US Defense Cooperation represented the latest in a series of enhancements since the 1997 revision of the Defense Guidelines. But it was in Southeast Asia that the rebalance received the most attention. The Obama administration opened new ties with Myanmar, elevated relations with Vietnam, forged a new strategic partnership with Indonesia, and strengthened an already excellent relationship with Singapore. The traditional alliance with the Philippines received a significant boost with the conclusion of an Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement that gives the US access to multiple bases on Philippine soil. President Obama also upgraded relationship with ASEAN by acceding to the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, joining the East Asia Summit, and hosting, for the first time, a US–ASEAN summit on American soil in February 2016. Equally notably, Washington threw its weight into the South China Sea disputes between China and its Southeast Asian neighbours by declaring continued access to the South China Sea as a US national interest during an ARF meeting in 2010. Between October 2015 and October 2016, the US Navy conducted four Freedom of Navigation operations near Chinese-held islets in the South China Sea.

Economic rebalance

In the economic domain, the Obama administration championed the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) as the *sine qua non* of the rebalance. Signed by twelve Asia-Pacific countries in February 2016, the TPP was the largest and most ambitious free trade agreement undertaken by the United States. But in the face of alarmist predictions about China's economic dominance in Asia, American thinking about the TPP narrowed considerably from economic mutual benefit to zero-sum geopolitical contest with China for Asian leadership. President Obama framed it in terms of a must-win competition with China in global rules-making. But all such posturing came to naught with the election of Trump as the American president in November 2016. Even before the US Congress could consider its ratification, the TPP became the first casualty of Trump's populist anti-globalization economic agenda.

The Obama administration framed the purpose of the rebalance strategy so as to capitalize on the growing importance of the Asia-Pacific region and to derive political, economic, and military benefits for the United States. The strategy was also designed to reassure allies of America's continued commitment to regional leadership during an era of rapidly growing Chinese power and influence. Building on some of the measures already taken by the Bush administration, the Obama rebalance sought to consolidate America's traditional Asia strategy built around hard bilateral security ties and soft multilateral economic relations, while innovating the bilateral alliance system with a new network structure and upgrading economic engagement with a high-standard trade agreement.

But the strategy faced a range of criticisms, from claims that it lacked substance to predictions that it would antagonize China (see Key quotes 15.6). Far from seeing the rebalance as a benign reassurance about building a constructive relationship with China, Chinese elites considered it a major strategic challenge that must be met with a determined yet patient response (Zhang 2016). There was a widespread perception in both Beijing and Washington that Sino-US strategic mistrust deepened during the Obama years, despite new cooperation in important areas such as climate change. But the biggest challenge to the strategy came not from abroad, but from home. With a new Trump administration assuming office in January 2017, the Obama administration's rebalance strategy suffered a premature death. The Trump team may have retained certain aspects of the rebalance that have proved to be historically enduring in America's Asia strategy, such as military superiority to keep the pursuit of regional hegemony alive. But given the very different strategic outlook of Trump and his advisors, America's Asia strategy seems poised to undergo a new round of uncertainty and change.

KEY QUOTES 15.6: ANALYSIS OF THE REBALANCE

The United States is a Pacific power, and we are here to stay.
(Obama 2011)

The new US policy [of rebalance to the Asia-Pacific] unnecessarily compounds Beijing's insecurities and will only feed China's aggressiveness, undermine regional stability, and decrease the possibility of cooperation between Beijing and Washington.
(Ross 2012: 72)

> The Obama administration's rebalance to Asia constituted a strategic course correction for US foreign policy. Yet the policy never achieved high-level clarity and coherence, in no small measure because of the absence of an authoritative and singular public strategic document.
>
> (*Cronin 2016: 2*)

KEY POINTS

- By late 2011 and early 2012, the Obama administration had settled on a new Asian strategy referred to as the 'pivot' or 'rebalance'.
- The rebalance is a comprehensive strategy across the military, diplomatic, and economic domains in order to ensure America's continued regional leadership.
- The rebalance strategy faced a range of criticisms from claims that it lacked substance to predictions that it would antagonize China, but the biggest challenge came from the election of Trump as the new American president in November 2016.

Conclusion

As a new Trump administration took office in January 2017, the role of the United States in the Asia-Pacific faced more uncertainties than at any point since the end of the Second World War. This chapter has shown that ever since the United States emerged victorious and hegemonic from that war, it has embraced deep engagement with the region as a fundamental tenet of its Asia policy. At times, however, the US role vacillated between hegemony and balance. During the Cold War, it went from a confident drive for regional hegemony during 1945–69 to a quest for strategic partnerships, especially with China, after the Vietnam War debacle, in order to contain the Soviet Union. US hegemony in Asia was thus partial and short-lived. The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union amplified US power and status, and made the pursuit of regional hegemony again a viable goal. Indeed, all post–Cold War administrations from Bush senior to Obama have tried to preserve US strategic superiority and maintain US leadership in the region. But even during the height of US power in the 1990s, Washington can at best be said to have achieved an incomplete hegemony (Mastanduno 2003).

Will the Trump administration commit itself to the post–Second World War strategy of ensuring US hegemony—or at least, leadership—in the Asia-Pacific, or will it instead withdraw from the region and share its leadership role with or even cede it to a rising China? Trump's nationalistic rhetoric during the presidential campaign made America's traditional Asian allies, especially Japan, nervous. If Trump makes good on this rhetoric and adopts strategic retrenchment from Asia as a new strategy, it will indeed constitute a fundamental break from America's historic post-war Asia strategy. It will not, however, mark a complete break from all the historical traditions of US strategy (see Key quotes 15.7). As this chapter has also shown, between the Spanish–American War of 1898 and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, when the United States was one of the world's great powers but not yet a superpower, it adopted the Open Door strategy for ensuring American access to East Asia and preventing the rise of a hostile Asian hegemony by playing balance-of-power politics among the great powers in Asia. Whether the approach was Open Door, hegemony, or balance, the consistent strategic goal of US policy toward Asia since the late nineteenth century has been to preserve American access to the region by preventing the domination of Asia by a hostile power. In the twentieth century, the target of this strategy was Japan and Russia/the Soviet Union. In the twenty-first century, it is above all China.

KEY QUOTES 15.7: CONTINUITY

> Through most of American history, US strategy [in Asia] has been implicit but fairly stable in its definition. American statecraft has worked to blend diplomatic, economic, and military *means* in order to prevent the emergence of a hegemon in Asia, which has been the key *way* to keep the region safe for American *ends* like trade, faith, democracy, and territorial security.
>
> (*Campbell 2016: 137, emphasis in original*)

It is also possible that the traditional Republican penchant for America's global superiority will rein in Trump's nationalism, thus sustaining the current strategy of making Asia safe for American hegemony. The question will then become: how long can the United States continue its quest for regional hegemony? Even without the Trump presidency,

America's role in Asia and its commitment to Asian leadership would still have confronted growing doubts and anxieties in the region. The Obama administration's much-vaunted rebalance strategy was, after all, an attempt to reassure regional allies about America's staying power and continued commitment after the economic recession generated by the 2008 global financial crisis and the two long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. But the rise of China is making the credibility of American power and resolve ever more questionable. If America remains committed to the traditional strategy of liberal hegemony by seeking to prevent an alleged Chinese bid for regional hegemony, that hegemonic strategy is likely to generate conflict with China about the future security order in Asia. Beyond China, other regional flashpoints will also pose challenges, from maritime disputes in the East and South China Seas to turbulence across the Taiwan Strait to North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Washington will feel even more compelled to find partnerships to deal with these challenges in order to sustain a regional order in its favour, just as it was compelled in the early 1970s to seek a strategic partnership with China to contain the Soviet Union in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. As America is in relative decline, its allies and partnerships are going to rise in prominence and shoulder more burdens in supporting the US-led regional order.

If, on the other hand, American retrenchment produces a more balanced bipolar or multipolar power structure in the Asia-Pacific, such an outcome will overturn much of the existing regional order created in the aftermath of the Second World War. China may not be ready for an expansive leadership role, and many other regional states, still looking to the United States for security protection and economic prosperity, may feel highly uncomfortable with such a fundamental change of regional order. But even in such a scenario, Washington would be called upon by regional states, likely including China, to play at least a managerial role in fostering regional stability. The United States will remain a key player in East Asia for a long time to come, even if it has to share the stage with China and a range of other actors, as is already the case.

QUESTIONS

1. For how long and why has the United States had interests in the Asia-Pacific?
2. What was the significance of the Open Door policy for US strategy toward Asia?
3. What impact did the Second World War have on the US position in the region?
4. How would you characterize the post-war relationship between the United States and Japan?
5. Why were the Korean and Vietnam Wars important for the United States?
6. Why did the United States and China re-establish a diplomatic partnership in the 1970s?
7. Should the United States fear or welcome China's rise?
8. Why did the United States fail to prevent North Korea from developing nuclear weapons?
9. What are the current challenges facing the US position in the Asia-Pacific?
10. How long can the United States remain hegemonic in the Asia-Pacific?

FURTHER READING

Campbell, K. M. (2016), *The Pivot: The Future of American Statecraft in Asia* (New York: Twelve)

Part scholarship and part advocacy from a chief architect behind the Barack Obama administration's strategy of pivot or rebalance to Asia

Christensen, T. J. (2015), *The China Challenge: Shaping the Choices of a Rising Power* (New York: Norton)

Insightful exploration of US policy toward China in the post Cold War era by a prominent scholar who served in the George W. Bush administration

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Important take on a new US strategy toward Asia running through the Bush and Obama administrations.

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16

US foreign policy in Latin America

James Dunkerley

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Introduction

The uncertainty of US–Latin American relations in the second decade of the twenty-first century was highlighted by two high-profile visits to the region made by US political figures in 2016. In March President Barack Obama visited Havana to provide ceremonial confirmation of the restoration of diplomatic relations between the USA and Cuba after 54 years. Obama was the first US president to visit Cuba for eighty-eight years. He did not order a change in the special terms afforded to immigrants from the communist state under the Cold War, nor could he greatly alter the terms of the trade embargo imposed by Congress in the 1960s. Nonetheless, the initiative was a significant shift in US policy.

The second visit, by Donald Trump to Mexico in August 2016, proved nearly as controversial since as a presidential candidate Trump had rudely disparaged Mexican immigrants in his campaign, threatening to deport millions and to build a wall along the border, at the expense of Mexican taxpayers. Trump's interview with President Peña Nieto transpired to be more moderate in tone, but once back in the USA, he revived his protectionist rhetoric, and attacked companies planning to shift operations to Mexico. The prospect of neighbourly relations under the forty-fifth president looked distinctly unsettled.

This chapter surveys the historical evolution of US relations with Latin America (for a map, see Figure 16.1). The contemporary geopolitical balance of power within the western hemisphere is highly asymmetrical. US policy in the region has usually been determined under

Figure 16.1 Map of Central and South America.

various doctrines and was only partly affected by the Cold War, so the post–Cold War period has seen only some changes to the historical pattern. The second section surveys that historical background from the Monroe Doctrine and manifest destiny, which sought to contain European expansion and to justify that of the USA under an ethos of hemispherism. The third section covers the projection of US power beyond its frontiers in the early twentieth century. Direct intervention in Central America and the Caribbean was common until the depression of the 1930s, when a less unilateral approach was adopted. After 1945 the implementation of policy was often routed through the multilateral institutions set up after the Second World War. However, the Cuban Revolution prompted an aggressively ideological approach. The chapter traces policy towards the left in Central America, where armed conflict prevailed in the 1980s, and in South America, where the Washington Consensus brought an end to the anti-European aspects of the Monroe Doctrine by promoting globalization. The failure of this free trade platform to provide sustained growth contributed to regional disenchantment and the emergence after 2001 of a political current

unsympathetic to Washington's renewed unilateralist tendencies. Relations improved in tone under the first Obama government, and in substance during his second administration.

On 6 September 2001 President George W. Bush had invited Mexico's President Fox to a joint session of Congress, declaring that Mexico 'is our most important relationship'. Within a week the attacks of 9/11 meant that this relationship was downgraded for over five years. According to Michael Shifter, 'at least in the short term no other country in the world was as deflated [as Mexico] by the new configuration brought about by September' (Shifter 2002: 52). Latin America as a whole felt the shift nearly as acutely.

This new reality was not immediately reversed under the new Democratic administration of Barack Obama, despite the president's personal and diplomatic success at the April 2009 Organization of American States (OAS) summit at Port of Spain, Trinidad, at which he committed himself to a much more open, consultative style in regional affairs. Indeed, the high expectations of a change in US–Latin American relations in the period up to the 2010 mid-term elections in the US never recovered from Washington's ambivalent stance over a coup in Honduras in June 2009; its clumsy response to the Haitian earthquake of January 2010; the controversial and semi-secret negotiation of new military bases in Colombia; Washington's failure to address the issue of immigration so important to its neighbour Mexico, which was also afflicted by widespread killings by drug traffickers mostly with weaponry freely purchased in the USA; and then the revelation of internal State Department concerns in the Wikileaks scandal, in which about a tenth of the 252,000 leaked cables related to Latin America.

Bush's tour of 2007 to six countries of South and Central America proved less of a failure than some had anticipated in view of the fact that only seven of the regional states had supported the invasion of Iraq (all of them had been in the midst of trade negotiations or, in the case of Colombia, in receipt of annual military aid of $600 million). The tour was less triumphant than the famous visit to South America by Franklin Roosevelt in 1936, when non-intervention and a new-found sense of good neighbourliness were at its peak. On the other hand, Bush's presence never excited the popular venom provoked by Richard Nixon's visit of 1958, when the physical safety of the vice-president was put at risk. Unsurprisingly, given his treatment, Nixon told Donald Rumsfeld in 1971, 'Latin America doesn't matter ... People don't give a damn about Latin America now' (Reid 2007: 1). Even during the Cold War, Washington has seen the region as one of limited costs and risks.

Since the Second World War the emergence of global and multilateral institutions has broadened the channels for the development of US policy towards the rest of the hemisphere. This has reduced the image of the unilateralism of the early twentieth century, and it has provided Latin American states with some subordinate voice in hemispheric affairs.

One result of this asymmetry has been the widespread conviction within the region that development policies promoted by Washington and its allies have yielded, at best, very modest results. Although two-thirds of foreign direct investment in Mexico is of US origin and the USA is Mexico's largest trading partner, every year a million Mexicans migrate to the USA. This raises doubts as to the qualities of contemporary globalization and how far the formal bilateral relations between the two states matter in the lives of ordinary Mexicans. Many of these immigrants are returning to territory that was Mexican before 1848, and the issue of national sovereignty and pride remains a key issue in popular culture as well as public policy on both sides of the border.

Brazil, the region's only Portuguese-speaking country and a state of semi-continental proportions, has had no tradition of anti-Americanism. However, since the onset of democratic government in the 1990s, Brazil has increasingly sought to develop a South American bloc of states and to negotiate over Washington's free trade policies on a regional basis rather than the individual bilateral basis preferred by the USA. For the Brazilian foreign ministry there is no such thing as 'Latin America' because Mexico's membership of NAFTA since 1994 placed that country firmly within the North American economic circuit. At the 2003 World Trade Organization (WTO) summit at Cancún, Mexico, Brazil took the regional lead in contesting the US and European limited versions of free trade, particularly over agricultural production and intellectual property. Brazil, by virtue of its size and regional role, has avoided the need of many states to seek out 'the greatest and most powerful ally' or to accept that 'the USA is our best friend, whether we like it or not'. Yet, even under the Workers' Party governments, Washington generally found Brasília to be a reasonable regional partner with which differences over distinct policies have not descended into ideological conflict.

Cuba, along with Puerto Rico, remained a colony of Spain throughout the nineteenth century. Despite frequent US efforts to purchase the prosperous slave-based plantation island up until the Civil War, it was not overtly threatened by the Monroe Doctrine, which was aimed at new European colonies. Although in 1898 Washington invaded Cuba, it did so with the explicit objective of halting the brutal Spanish campaign against the Cuban independence movement. As a result of this and the domestic anti-colonial lobby, it proved impossible to annex the country, which in 1902 acquired the status of an independent republic. However, the Platt Amendment to the US Army Appropriations Act of 1901 restricted Cuba's freedom to trade or form military alliances as well as permitting US intervention should its citizens or their property be threatened. An example of both conditionality and the use of Congress to formulate foreign policy, the Platt Amendment effectively reduced Cuba to informal colonial status until the amendment was withdrawn in 1934 following a revolution in the island.

The Cuban Revolution, which took state power in 1959 and remained in force over fifty years later, sealed that country's exceptional status on a number of grounds. Cuba became and long remained the sole communist state in the western hemisphere; for thirty years it was a highly dependent client of the USSR and so drew the region more tightly into Cold War strategic culture than would otherwise have been the case. Throughout that period Cuba was subject to a US embargo, widespread diplomatic isolation, and exclusion from many regional organizations. The Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 was a moment of huge international consequence in the nuclear age, and Washington understandably formulated policy towards Cuba with its eyes set on Eastern Europe before the rest of the hemisphere. However, within Latin America Cuba increasingly came to stand as a symbol of nationalist resistance, small-state solidarity, and a Spartan critique of the North American consumerist ethos that many Latin American governments had sought and failed to emulate.

From the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion of April 1961 onwards, US administrations both openly called for and covertly planned 'regime change' in Havana (although after the Missile Crisis they pledged not to enforce this unilaterally). In the wake of the collapse of the USSR in the early 1990s and with Castro's severe illness in 2006 such change seemed close at hand, but it did not come about until 2014. Nor, indeed, was it broadly supported in a region long suspicious of interventionism. Many Latin Americans who harboured little sympathy for communism recognized the prophecy of Simón Bolívar in 1830 that the United States 'seems destined by providence to plague America with torments in the name of freedom'. Familiar with the core US policy motifs of promoting freedom and democracy, the Latin American response has often been to accept this idealist rhetoric as a constant and to question its practical application in discrete cases on realist grounds. In the case of Cuba, even the pro-US and quite conservative OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza felt constrained to advise Condoleezza Rice, 'There is no transition, and it is not your country.'

Jorge Domínguez has argued that the Cold War did not in many respects affect US–Latin American relations: 'The United States had faced military, political and economic competition in the Americas from extra-continental powers before the Cold War, just as it did during the Cold War' (Domínguez in Bulmer-Thomas and Dunkerley 1999: 33). However, he also shows that the Cold War did introduce a strong ideological element that sometimes disturbed Washington's 'normal' interest-based or realist approaches, and this continued to be the case for Cuba even after 1991. So, despite strong evidence that the embargo fortified Castro, the hard-line policy of antagonism was retained. This was in good measure because the vocal and electorally powerful Cuban émigré communities of Florida and New Jersey were able to hold all administrations to account over commitments made from the 1960 election campaign and during the Kennedy administration. Nowhere else—not even in Mexico during the revolution or in Nicaragua under the Sandinistas—had such an unbending policy been sustained for such a time. For this reason it is best seen as exceptional and not representative.

Although Brazil, Cuba, and Mexico may be treated as exceptional in certain key aspects, they have still been subject to the broad conditions of US policy making towards the region described by Lars Schoultz:

> "For nearly two centuries, three interests have determined the content of US policy toward Latin America: the need to protect US security, the desire to accommodate the demands of US domestic politics, and the drive to promote US economic development. Each generation's specific policies have changed with the times and the circumstances, as one year's fear of communist

adventurism yields to next year's dismay over human rights violations, as the Big Stick transmutes into Dollar Diplomacy and then Good Neighborliness, as democracy and free trade vie for attention with drug trafficking and immigration. ❞

(Schoultz 1998: 367)

Within these parameters we can identify three unique and enduring features. First is the prominence of the doctrinal format, from Monroe, through Theodore Roosevelt's 'Corollary', F. D. Roosevelt's 'Good Neighbor Policy', and John F. Kennedy's 'Alliance for Progress', to a doctrine that seemed almost ashamed of its status—the Washington Consensus.

The second feature is the cultural tension between the two sectors of the hemisphere, and particularly the frequent Anglo-American disparagement of Hispanic Catholic tradition. We shall return in the final section to this theme with respect to the exceptionalist claims about Latin America's present 'threat' to the social and moral fabric of the USA (Key quote 16.5). We should also note the more prevalent commitment to a modernization theory within US policy circles, non-governmental organizations, and development agencies. This perspective often assumes that the USA's own path of development provides the natural model for the rest of the continent, overlooking significant historical differences. US policy makers frequently misunderstand indigenous cultures or the outlook of poor peasants, who are often key constituents in Latin America but never formed part of the mainstream historiography of the USA.

The third special feature is the degree to which US–Latin American relations have impacted upon the territory and population of the USA itself, from the Louisiana Purchase, through the USA's annexation of half of Mexico's territory in the 1840s, to mass immigration from the 1990s onward.

Latin America and the formation of the modern USA

'Latin America' is a term that first appeared in the 1850s and was in regular use before the 1930s. In 1783, when the thirteen colonies had won independence from Great Britain as the United States, Spain controlled a very great part of what would become over the following century the modern, continental USA. Figure 16.2 shows how conflicts involving European powers enabled Washington to expand its new 'empire', most notably through the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, when Napoleon, facing defeat at the hands of the ex-slaves of St Domingue (Haiti), turned his attentions back to European expansion and sold the Spanish-administered mid-section of North America to the USA. Napoleon's subsequent invasions of Portugal (1807) and Spain (1808) removed their monarchies, the first relocating to Brazil, which declared itself an independent empire in 1822, and the second going into exile. As a result, Spain's American colonies began to agitate for self-government.

The Latin American experience of national liberation and decolonization had no precedent other than that of the USA itself from Great Britain. Following the Congress of Vienna (1814–15), London had sought to restore its ties with Washington and to distance itself from the resurgent absolutism of the European monarchies of the Holy Alliance. As a result, in mid-1823—when Mexico, Central America, and much of South America were free of Spanish rule but unrecognized by the major powers—Foreign Secretary Canning inquired of the Monroe administration whether it would consider a joint statement on policy towards the region. What became known as the Monroe Doctrine was Washington's response to that overture. However, its twin precepts of non-colonization (including the 'non-transferability' of colonies between European powers) and 'two spheres' (the Americas and Europe) proved to be far more consequential than the initial pragmatic rationale for the diplomatic recognition of the ex-Spanish colonies as republics.

Within fifteen years it was plain to the new Latin American states that Washington would not detain the USA's rising and highly mobile population from moving west and south. On the one hand, this involved the dispossession of the traditional lands of the Native American peoples and their relocation to the western territories. On the other, it embodied the idea of manifest destiny, whereby providential powers were invoked to justify expansion into lands held both by indigenous peoples and the successor states to the Spanish empire.

Although fought 160 years ago, the Mexican–American War is still sharply recalled south of the new border that was established in 1848–53. Mexican national pride was assaulted by a series of defeats inflicted by US troops. The idea that the USA might simply conquer new territory from other republics was anathema to some sections of opinion in New England, while

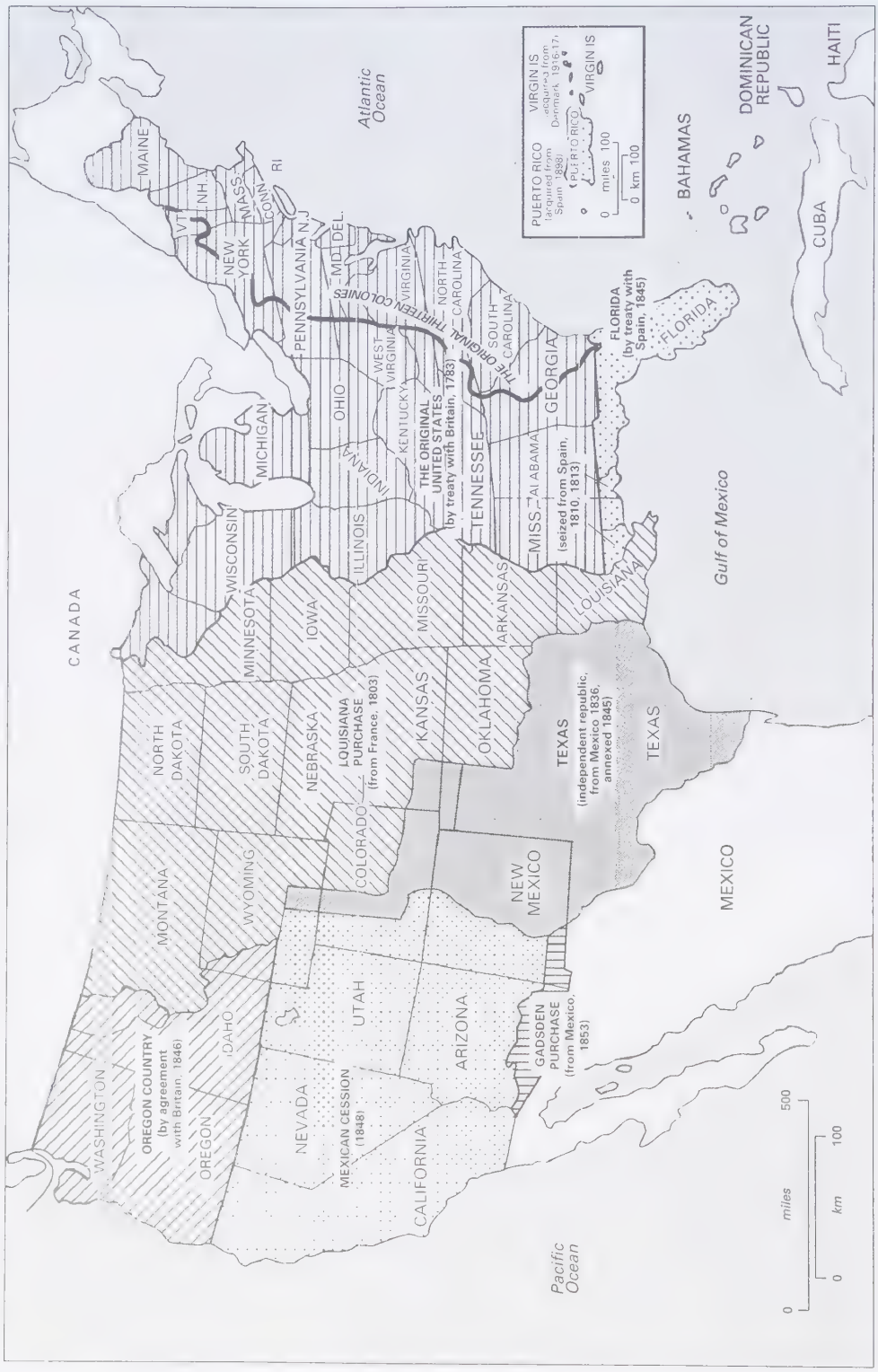

Fig. 16.2 Territorial growth of the United States, 1783–1853.

many in the slaveholding South felt that Catholic, Spanish-speaking peoples could not be incorporated into the USA without damaging its constitutional balance over the institution of slavery. Today those millions of Mexicans who have migrated to US states west of the Mississippi are moving to lands that were held for far longer by Madrid than they have been by Washington. From one perspective, 'the United States came to us, not we to it'.

If the Mexican War contributed to the origins of the US Civil War, that country also suffered sharply through the collapse of the Union—an experience which served to revive the apparently moribund Monroe Doctrine. With the USA unable to sustain its foreign ambitions in the early 1860s, the European powers returned momentarily to regional affairs, most notably in the effort to administer Mexico under the European Prince Maximilian, sponsored by the French Emperor Louis Napoleon. That tragic adventure presaged the European 'Rush for Africa' over the following decades, but it was already an anachronism in a western hemisphere where the culture of colonialism had been comprehensively repudiated.

Maximilian's nemesis, Benito Juárez, the first indigenous head of an American state, showed some signs of forming with Abraham Lincoln the kind of 'special relationship' later sought by Presidents Fox and Bush. However, assassination and the unforgiving course of Mexican political life meant that whilst US reconstruction was accompanied to the north by self-government in Canada, to the south it coexisted with the long-term dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz (1876–1910). For decades, US talk of democracy in Mexico was rare and empty, and a steep price would be paid for that 'benign neglect' in the revolutionary era that followed. But a pattern was emerging—Washington favoured political stability and economic opportunity in Mexico above all else, including political freedom, for reasons of national security.

With the construction of the trans-continental railroad in 1869, the wars against the Native Americans of the Plains states over the following decades, and simultaneous intense industrialization, the USA was reaching the limits of a 'home-based' policy towards the rest of the hemisphere. Washington's rising interest in the potential of a Pan-American strategy failed to develop into an enduring hemispheric initiative until the start of the 1890s, when trade and investment had grown to such a level that financial arrangements, particularly currency exchange rates, and the rules of international commerce required agreement on a continental scale.

The 1898 intervention in Cuba occurred, then, at a time when the US frontier had been closed for almost a decade, when Washington was concerned about European economic competition rather than colonial expansion in the rest of the hemisphere, and when overseas opportunities for trade and investment were being avidly sought. Now pledged to a 'two ocean' strategy involving the capacity to operate simultaneously in the Atlantic and Pacific, Washington was industriously building up its naval strength. Extra-continental projection of force had become imaginable by dint of intra-hemispheric supremacy (see Key quotes 16.1). Nonetheless, this first real experience of regional asymmetry brought fast in its wake the problems of conflict management in constitutionally and culturally foreign settings. The unilateral deployment of great power resources proved necessary but insufficient for maintaining prolonged and legitimate leadership.

KEY QUOTES 16.1: THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MIGHTY: OLNEY AND ROOSEVELT

Today the United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and its fiat is law upon subjects to which its confines its interposition. Why? It is not because of the pure friendship or good will felt for it. It is not simply by reason of its high character as a civilized state, nor because wisdom and justice and equity are the invariable characteristics of the dealings of the United States. It is because, in addition to all other grounds, its infinite resources combined with its isolated position render it master of the situation and practically invulnerable as against any or all other powers.

(Secretary of State Richard Olney to Thomas Bayard, 18 May 1895)

Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the western hemisphere the adhesion of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power.

(President Theodore Roosevelt to Congress, 9 December 1904)

KEY POINTS

- The Monroe Doctrine was not a charter for US expansion but for containing European territorial intervention in the Americas.
- 'Manifest destiny' was a popular ideology that justified expansion and assumed the cultural superiority of Anglo-America.
- Aside from the Mexican War, the USA was primarily involved in expansion within continental North America until 1898.
- US–Latin American relations in the nineteenth century were much stronger in Central America than in South America.

A reluctant superpower

If the United States truly became an 'empire' in 1898, it certainly did not do so in the European manner of acquiring colonies. Not only was Cuba retained on a protectorate basis under the Platt Amendment but the Supreme Court ruled in 1901 that Puerto Rico 'was foreign to the United States in the domestic sense'. (US citizenship was granted to the population of Puerto Rico in 1917, and the island became a self-governing commonwealth in 1952. Puerto Ricans may travel freely into and out of the USA.)

In 1905 Theodore Roosevelt declared that 'the United States has not the slightest desire for territorial aggrandizement at the expense of any of its southern neighbors'. This was no mere rhetoric: Washington wanted not more land but markets. Between 1870 and 1900 Great Britain had added 4.7 million square miles to its empire and France 3.5 million, but US territories grew by only 125,000 square miles. Yet Roosevelt feared European intrusion in the hemisphere. When, in 1902–3, Germany and Britain tried through naval strength to enforce financial claims on Venezuela, Roosevelt sought to clarify strategy by issuing a 'corollary' to the Monroe Doctrine. He recognized that European intervention would now probably take the form of enforcing commercial agreements and that the failure of Latin American states to meet their international obligations was the most likely cause of such intrusion. In a December 1904 message to Congress, Roosevelt so qualitatively expanded the meaning and application of the 1823 message that many saw it as a total break with the original Monroe Doctrine.

Roosevelt's 'corollary' retained the notion of the two spheres, but these were now between 'civilized' and 'uncivilized' states. Whereas Monroe had effectively been supporting revolutions, Roosevelt was resolutely opposed to them, and while Monroe had urged non-intervention, Roosevelt reserved that right to the USA, assuming US control over markets, wherever they were located. Above all else, the Roosevelt corollary represented a declaration of conditionality of US policy upon the behaviour of regional states as much as it was a manifesto towards Europe.

The corollary was encouraged by the accelerated and conflictive manner in which Washington had acquired the rights to build an inter-oceanic canal through Panama. Until 1903 Panama had been a province of Colombia, but the Senate of that country refused to ratify the treaty with the USA over the canal since it would surrender so much sovereign power. As a result, Washington supported a Panamanian revolution, recognized the new country's independence in record time, and over the following decade undertook a quite remarkable piece of civil engineering for strategic purposes, allowing two-oceanic naval planning and providing an awesome example of North American industrial vision and capacity.

However, it was precisely in the first three decades of the twentieth century, when the USA secured such manifest superiority over both the local states and its European competitors, that it intervened most often, and to widespread criticism at home and abroad. Roosevelt, always disposed towards belligerence, started this process, but his successors Taft and Wilson failed to replace 'the big stick' with non-violent 'dollar diplomacy' (Taft) and 'peace between equals' (Wilson).

Between 1898 and 1930 US gunboats were sent into Latin American ports more than 6000 times, marines were deployed in Cuba, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Haiti, and Panama, elections were supervised in six states, anti-government rebels actively supported in four countries, loans obligatorily renegotiated in six states, and governments in fourteen countries refused diplomatic recognition (Grandin 2006: 3; Dunkerley in Bulmer-Thomas and Dunkerley 1999: 10). Almost all this activity occurred in Central America and the Caribbean, and most was undertaken under governments which insistently repudiated intervention as their preferred policy.

What happened? Basically, US economic ties with Latin America had widened and deepened to such an

extent that it was no longer possible for an administration to determine precisely how it would respond to circumstances driven by market forces beyond its direct control. US investment overseas had risen from $700 million in 1897 to $3.5 billion in 1914, over half of it in Latin America. With the First World War severely reducing European trade and capital flows, the USA had by the 1920s come to dominate the commercial and financial life of the Caribbean basin. Such economic dominance brought with it political complications, and not all of them were readily negotiable.

In the 1890s criticism of 'the northern colossus' had taken a largely literary or cultural form—in the campaigning journalism of the Cuban martyr José Martí or the essays of the Uruguayan José Enrique Rodó, whose polemic *Ariel* depicted the USA as a vulgar, materialist democracy dominated by the mob and counterposed to the classical tradition. By the 1920s, anti-Americanism was taking a more activist form, with calls for the internationalization of the Panama Canal and widespread support for Augusto César Sandino, who from 1928 led an effective guerrilla campaign against US military occupation of Nicaragua. By 1933 this opposition contributed not only to the withdrawal of the marines but also to a major shift in US policy to the region as a whole (see Key quotes 16.2).

KEY QUOTES 16.2: BURYING THE BIG STICK: THE CLARK MEMO AND GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY

The so-called 'Roosevelt corollary' was to the effect, as generally understood, that in case of financial or other difficulties in weak Latin American countries, the United States should attempt an adjustment lest European Governments should intervene, and intervening should occupy territory—an act which would be contrary to the principles of the Monroe Doctrine … it is not believed that this corollary is justified by the terms of the Monroe Doctrine, however much it may be justified by the application of the doctrine of self-preservation … So far as Latin America is concerned, the Doctrine is now, and always has been, not an instrument of violence and oppression, but an unbought, freely bestowed, and wholly effective guaranty of their freedom, independence, and territorial integrity against the imperialistic designs of Europe.

(*Undersecretary of State Reuben Clark, to Secretary Frank Kellogg, December 1928*)

The essential qualities of a true pan Americanism must be the same as those which constitute a good neighbor, namely, mutual understanding, and, through such understanding, a sympathetic appreciation of the other's point of view … the independence of each republic must recognize the independence of every other republic.

(*President F. D. Roosevelt, speech to Pan American Union, April 1933*)

In Mexico the economic, strategic, and diplomatic issues were of a greater order since US interests in the neighbouring country were the largest in the region and so placed in considerable jeopardy by the revolution (1910–20). After the prolonged and highly profitable US alliance with the pre-revolutionary Díaz regime, the prominent role of US ambassador Henry Lane Wilson in the assassination of President Madero in 1913 became infamous and set the two countries on a twenty-year course of tense contestation. In 1914 US forces attacked and occupied Veracruz for several months, reviving memories of the 1847 war. Two years later General Pershing invaded the state of Chihuahua in pursuit of the rebel leader Pancho Villa.

In 1917 the new Mexican constitution reserved to the state all rights over the subsoil, raising doubts over the property rights of US mining and oil companies. However, it was only in 1938 that Mexico finally expropriated all foreign oil companies, and then it promised compensation. Even before the Second World War this nationalist attitude was being extended to manufacturing, the larger Latin American states adopting policies of import-substituting industrialization in order to reduce what would later be termed dependency on the advanced northern economies.

By the time of the 1932 presidential election, a dictatorship in Cuba was enjoying US patronage by default under the Platt Amendment, and this demanded that Washington rethink and eventually repudiate the Roosevelt corollary. The fall in 1933 of the Machado regime in Cuba gave the new administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt a good opportunity to proclaim the Good Neighbour Policy, reversing the Roosevelt corollary, reducing tariffs, and making a virtue out of what many saw as the necessity of isolationism in the Great Depression.

Designed to be high-minded and restore the legitimacy squandered through thirty years of 'gunboat

diplomacy', the Good Neighbor Policy did not surrender US national interest. The tariff reductions that revived trade were conditional upon reciprocity from Latin American states. However, the policy did suspend the 'Americanist' vocation to promote freedom abroad. When it was enunciated, of the twenty-one states of the region only Colombia was ruled by a government that had come to power through an open election. Now the policy of non-intervention—or what some would call 'benign neglect'—effectively endorsed the existence of the many dictatorships installed in the wake of the 1929 Crash. In Brazil, Washington's closest ally, party politics was suspended and the authoritarian Estado Novo set up by Getúlio Vargas in 1935–7 in emulation of Salazar's Portuguese dictatorship.

The outbreak of the Second World War in Europe in September 1939 found the republics of the western hemisphere less politically invigilated than for fifty years but also tied to the US market to an unprecedented degree. War between European powers posed the long-discussed issue of a regional defence treaty that would make the Monroe Doctrine both practical and pluralistic. Although agreements on reciprocal defence were signed in 1940, it was only with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 that regional states were obliged to take hard decisions. Very few themselves upheld Roosevelt's four freedoms—of speech and religion, from want and fear—but fewer still could rely on extra-hemispheric alternatives to trade with the USA. Authoritarian Brazil provided troops which engaged with Nazi forces in Italy, but most of Latin America had only to confront the diplomatic and economic consequences of the conflict. All the Caribbean and Central American republics immediately followed Washington in declaring war on the Axis. However, caution, ideological sympathies, and the bi-oceanic nature of the conflict meant that several countries remained neutral until weeks before the end of the war: Chile, Venezuela, Uruguay (until February 1945), Argentina, and Paraguay (until March 1945).

KEY POINTS

- The Roosevelt corollary of 1904 made US policy conditional upon the behaviour of Latin American states—a significant shift from the Monroe Doctrine.
- The growth of US economic interests in the region not only surpassed its European competition but also complicated a foreign policy that had previously been based purely on political considerations.
- US interventionism in Central America and the Caribbean was extensive in the early twentieth century, although Washington preferred to avoid deployment of military forces.
- The Good Neighbor Policy introduced by F. D. Roosevelt in 1933 consolidated prior efforts to reduce direct US intervention but also suspended the promotion of democracy.

The prominent anti-fascist profile of the Allied campaign restored a long-suspended ideological element to hemispheric politics, and this would feed fiercely into the Cold War era. Yet in the immediate post-war years the region underwent an intense transitional experience whereby the populist Argentine government led by General Perón was targeted as fascistic and intent upon expanding its influence throughout South America. Perón, however, positively flourished on the nationalist backlash against ill-judged accusations, survived, and came to find a sober modus vivendi with Washington based on shared anti-communism.

The conflict with Perón presaged policy issues that would dominate US–Latin American relations until the 1990s. How was Washington to distinguish between state-based development policies and 'crypto-communism'? How could it promote liberal capitalism through social reform without undermining anti-communist allies? How were the requirements of NATO and traditional hemispheric security needs to be reconciled in the context of ideological challenges from Moscow, Beijing, and the third-world movements against imperialism and colonialism?

Cold War coexistence

The Cold War had a partial and uneven effect on US policy towards Latin America. Sometimes ideological aggression and interventionist impulses were given full rein (Guatemala, 1954; Cuba, 1961; Dominican Republic, 1965; Chile, 1970–3; Nicaragua, 1979–90; Grenada, 1983; Panama, 1989), but sometimes a more circumspect policy was applied (Venezuela, 1945–8; Bolivia, 1952–64; Peru, 1968–75; Honduras and Panama, 1972; Mexico, throughout). Washington could

tolerate high levels of commerce with the USSR (Argentina) or even extensive arms purchases from it (Peru), provided a fundamental anti-communism was sustained at home. Equally, agrarian reform was encouraged in some countries (Bolivia, Venezuela, Chile, and El Salvador) for its counter-insurgency potential, whereas it was deemed anathema in others (Guatemala, Cuba, Brazil) where it was seen to encourage popular radicalism. On occasion, such as the Falklands War of 1982, even a staunch anti-communist ally would be deserted for an older alliance (although forces within the Reagan cabinet resisted this).

Grandin suggests that one reason for this mixed record was that Washington used the hemisphere as a laboratory for testing the techniques of neo-colonial anti-communism in the third world. Domínguez, on the other hand, uses the example of the destabilization of the Allende government in Chile to question the logic and true usefulness to US national interest of such activity (in Bulmer-Thomas and Dunkerley 1999).

Two factors stand out in this period. First is the regular use by Washington of the new multilateral treaties and organizations. Of particular importance were the regional defence agreement signed at Rio in 1947 and the OAS in 1948. Sometimes described as a 'meeting of pigeons presided over by a cat', the OAS was preferred to the UN for its malleability—it proved unproblematic to suspend Cuba's membership in 1962—but by the 1970s it had become more independent.

As befitted an era of competition between liberal and collectivist development models, the institutions set up at Bretton Woods in 1944, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and related bodies including the World Bank, also became valuable channels for imposing economic discipline and making loans conditional upon fiscal austerity. By the 1980s such policies were no longer enforced in the unilateral manner of the Roosevelt corollary and were accepted as part of a capitalist regime that extended beyond narrow US national interests.

The second distinctive feature of late twentieth-century regional relations has already been noted—the importance of the Cuban revolution. Before 1959 regional anti-communism had either, as Grandin suggests, to experiment or to draw its repertoire of fears, soft-power, and counter-insurgency techniques from extra-hemispheric experiences. Once the rebels took power in Havana, US policy was transformed by a tangible foe occupying state power. Containment was not enough since Cuba initially urged emulation of its example, creating 'two, three Vietnams' in Che Guevara's provocative phrase, which did nothing to persuade Washington that domino theory was neater in theory than practice.

Havana, viewed throughout as a loyal but erratic client of Moscow, preferred supporting guerrilla groups to communist parties, several of which it helped to split. By the 1970s Castro displayed greater pragmatism and urged caution on the Sandinistas after they took power in Nicaragua. Often Washington recognized these features, but under the Reagan administration (1981–9) its invective was virulent. Moreover, the existence of a communist regime in the hemisphere sharpened the anti-communism of Latin American conservative forces, which increasingly embraced the ideology of the national security state, militarizing political power and suspending all civil liberties, which sometimes led to the mass murder of citizens by their own states (particularly in Chile and Argentina in the 1970s, and Guatemala and El Salvador in the 1980s).

The destabilization of the reformist government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala (see Box 16.1) was approved at the highest levels of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, orchestrated by the CIA, and favoured the interests of the United Fruit Company, whose lands had faced expropriation. Arbenz had been elected president in a fair poll and had adopted a modest programme of reforms. Yet Washington put his close ties to the country's small Communist Party at the heart of a propaganda campaign designed for its deterrent effects elsewhere as well as to destabilize a state that lacked the resources to match its radical rhetoric. The June 1954 overthrow of Arbenz by a band of US-trained rebels was not seriously opposed in the OAS, although it was recognized as Washington's work. That success encouraged a repeat of the combination of diplomatic isolation with covert action by local proxy forces against the Sandinistas in the 1980s.

BOX 16.1: THE CASE AGAINST GUATEMALA

That the domination or control of the political institutions of any American state by the international communist movement, extending to this hemisphere the political system of an extra-continental power, would constitute a threat to the sovereignty and political independence of all the American states, endangering the peace of America, and would call for appropriate action in accordance with existing treaties.

(Draft US resolution on Guatemala, OAS Conference, Caracas, Mar. 1954)

There was scant criticism of the Guatemalan operation in the USA at the height of the McCarthy era, but when the rebels took power in Cuba five years later (see Table 16.1) the debate over how Washington should respond was sharper. In the 1960 election campaign Kennedy attacked Nixon as weak on the issue, and his new government readily accepted plans for a Guatemalan-style invasion by counter-revolutionaries at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961. That operation was a disaster that helped to radicalize the Castro government, which not unreasonably supposed that it needed a superpower patron if it was to survive for long, and so assiduously developed an alliance with a sceptical but enticed Moscow. Within eighteen months this process had led the world to the verge of a stand-off between the world's leading nuclear powers. Kennedy opted for a naval blockade to prevent the USSR from siting missiles within 100 miles of the North American mainland, and Moscow stepped back once promises were secured that Cuba would not be invaded.

Again, criticism was slight since Kennedy's policy upheld the Monroe Doctrine, anti-communism, and regional security. However, by 1962 it was plain that the USA needed more than reactive policies to deal with the influence of Cuba. Military aid rose, counter-insurgency operations were continuously developed and planned—in 1965 the Johnson administration did not hesitate to invade the Dominican Republic—but they were now accompanied by North American calls for agrarian reform, institutional modernization, increased foreign investment, and political liberalization, all under the mantle of an Alliance for Progress.

Very much moulded in the idealistic style of the Kennedy government, the Alliance was driven more by rhetoric than by hard cash. Once Kennedy was gone, the policy lost priority, and by the end of the 1960s Washington had relegated reformist responses to radicalism. Johnson and Nixon welcomed a clutch of right-wing military dictatorships in South America without great concern for their anti-democratic character.

The rapid shift away from encouragement of liberal modernity back towards a threat-driven anti-communist strategy (see Key quotes 16.3) was most marked in the case of Chile. Although President Allende was a socialist and Santiago had diplomatic relations with both Havana and Moscow, the Chilean government was a weak constitutional coalition and did not seek ties with the Soviet bloc like those held by Cuba. Yet beneath a now familiar veil of secrecy, Nixon and Kissinger authorized the CIA to stop Allende's election and then, when that failed, to destabilize his government. The eventual coup of September 1973, in which Allende died, needed no direct US intervention, but the sixteen-year dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet owed much to Washington's support.

Table 16.1 Timeline of the Cuban Revolution

1952	Batista seizes power and establishes dictatorship.
953	Castro launches abortive assault on Moncada barracks, Santiago.
954	Che Guevara observes overthrow of Arbenz government in Guatemala.
1955	Castro and other surviving rebels amnestied, go into Mexican exile.
1956	Rebel yacht *Granma* lands in southern Cuba; guerrilla operations begin.
957	Second guerrilla column set up under Che Guevara.
958	Raúl Castro establishes new front in north. Washington imposes arms embargo on Batista government following human rights violations; Batista removed in military coup.
1959	January: rebels take Havana after a general strike brings down military junta; Fidel Castro takes control. May: agrarian reform starts.
960	May: Cuba establishes diplomatic relations with USSR. June: US oil companies nationalized; further expropriation of foreign-owned property. October: US imposes trade embargo.
1961	January: US breaks diplomatic relations with Cuba. April: abortive counter-revolutionary landing at Bay of Pigs.
962	22-8 October: Missile Crisis.

KEY QUOTES 16.3: THE COLD WAR REVIVED IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Human rights is the soul of our foreign policy.

(*US President Jimmy Carter, 1978*)

What did the Carter administration do in Nicaragua? It brought down the Somoza regime … acted repeatedly and at critical junctures to weaken the government of Anastasio Somoza and to strengthen his opponents … hurried efforts to force complex and unfamiliar political practices on societies lacking the requisite political culture, tradition, and social structures not only fail to produce the desired outcomes; if they are undertaken at a time when a traditional regime is under attack, they actually facilitate the job of the insurgents.

(*Kirkpatrick 1979*)

Many of our citizens don't fully understand the seriousness of the situation, so let me put it bluntly: There is a war in Central America that is being fuelled by the Soviets and the Cubans. They are arming, training and supplying, and encouraging a war to subjugate another nation to communism, and that nation is El Salvador. The Soviets and the Cubans are operating from a base called Nicaragua. And this is the first real Communist aggression on the American mainland.

(*Reagan 1983: 1044*)

Washington's role in destabilizing the Allende government aroused controversy at home, prompting a congressional investigation into US covert operations in the region. In the wake of defeat in Vietnam, this current of criticism helped to reanimate support for the multilateral approach developed by the Carter White House. Carter's deliberate adoption of a 'low profile' included negotiating return of the canal to Panama and criticizing the human rights violations of the dictatorships, which, in a new form of conditionality, lost military aid. This was most telling in Central America.

The radical movements of Central America in the 1980s have been described as 'inevitable revolutions' (LaFeber 1983) because they sprang out of prolonged poverty and political oppression. The movement was most advanced in Nicaragua, where the FSLN (Sandinistas) challenged the sixty-year rule of the Somoza family. When, late in 1978, the FSLN threatened to take power, Washington sought OAS support for multilateral intervention but this was declined, not least because several dictatorships wanted to avoid a precedent that might be used against them. Carter had to harden his policy, but he came under fierce criticism. Reagan's 1980 election campaign made much of the 'loss' of Central America, and his government subsequently adopted the ideas and services of the Democrat academic Jeane Kirkpatrick, who defended the 'moderate repression' of the Argentine dictatorship (under which at least 15,000 people disappeared) as far more acceptable than the communist alternatives that she saw Carter's policies as encouraging.

Once in office, Reagan sought not just to contain the Sandinistas but to 'make them say Uncle'. At the same time, he provided military aid to El Salvador, where the FMLN guerrillas were strong. These forces were certainly supported by Managua and Havana, but their resilience owed more to popular support, strategic ability, and the unpopularity of the regimes they were fighting. Washington recognized this, held back from close association with the Guatemalan regime, which had a particularly bad record of repression, and forced the Salvadorian government to accept agrarian reform and elections as key counter-insurgency tactics.

KEY POINTS

- The Cold War did not have a uniform impact on US–Latin American relations after 1947.
- Washington retained a pragmatic or 'realist' approach to the region where it did not perceive a serious radical challenge.
- The Cuban Revolution changed US–Latin American relations, introducing the only communist regime in the western hemisphere.
- Although Cuba initially sought to encourage other revolutions and was always sympathetic to radical causes, after 1973 it displayed a quite pragmatic policy in the western hemisphere.
- After the Cuban Revolution, US policy alternated between hard-line, military-led approaches (Johnson/Nixon/Reagan) and those that included a significant element of 'soft power' (Kennedy/Carter/Bush Sr./Clinton).

Yet Reagan's Central American policy rested on vocal accusations of communist conspiracy. Domestic concern at the renewed threat of covert operations against the government of Nicaragua led to congressional amendments which aimed to avert a repetition of the Chilean experience. However, the CIA and officers of the National Security Council sought to circumvent constitutional restrictions imposed by Congress. They clandestinely raised cash to fund their counter-revolutionary forces based in Honduras and Costa Rica by selling missiles to Iran, which was then at war with Iraq. When this doubly illegal operation was revealed, a major political scandal—the Iran-Contra Affair—broke out.

The guerrilla wars in Guatemala and El Salvador were eventually settled by UN- and European-brokered peace accords in the 1990s. The Sandinistas were removed from office in 1990, but by the Nicaraguan electorate. The Reagan policy had yielded some success—it had certainly stopped national conflicts combining into a Central American regional war, but it did so at very high costs to its support and legitimacy elsewhere.

The Washington Consensus questioned

In August 1982 Mexico effectively went bankrupt by defaulting on its sovereign debt. Other countries had likewise sought to subsidize national industries and welfare systems by borrowing on the international markets in the wake of the oil crises of the 1970s; they were barely less vulnerable. The governments and the private banks that had lent so generously to them in uncertain times now faced demands from the IMF for stabilization of trading accounts and strictly balanced budgets, which usually meant a substantial reduction in 'public goods' such as health and education—all with the objective of securing growth, and with the alleviation of poverty a strictly secondary issue. Under this 'neo-liberal' agenda, the economies were to be opened up as much as possible to international trade since this would, according to the classical economic theories dominating the multilateral institutions, produce growth, and the results of growth would, sooner or later, 'trickle down' to the benefit of the poor.

In fact, the poor of Latin America grew in number, as did income inequality as a whole. The only tangible benefit of neo-liberalism for the millions under the poverty line was the severe reduction in inflation. Everywhere, the post-war 'boom' was over, and multilateral institutions were enforcing orthodox capitalist policies and management. Almost everywhere public spending was slashed, companies went broke, and employment fell. What failed to follow for over a decade was sustained growth and renewed investment in public services. Even private foreign investment was cautious, after an upsurge in the late 1990s proved short-lived.

As the larger economies opened up under what became known as the Washington Consensus, they became exposed to the erratic movements of international finance, with the result that Mexico suffered a severe monetary crisis in 1994–5, Brazil in 1998–9, and Argentina in 2001–3. Liberalization had brought its own problems, even if it had lessened the problems of import-substituting industrialization, mixed economies, and unorthodox fiscal policies. What had been sold in the early 1980s as a foolproof 'one-size-fits-all' solution was shown to be very uneven. Even in Chile, where the Pinochet regime introduced an early adjustment programme designed with advice from the University of Chicago, it proved necessary to bail out banks and limit the movement of foreign finance.

Elsewhere, in a very poor country like Bolivia or a medium-sized oil state such as Venezuela, 'stabilization' sparked mass unemployment and enduring social discontent. The most modern form of 'conditionality' had proved to be an insensitive instrument in itself and Washington was not always able to micromanage a controversial 'consensus' founded in its own name. Only in the case of the Mexican crisis of 1994–5 did the Clinton administration act directly to bail out its neighbour—for fear of the consequences for the USA of a second hemispheric debt crisis south of the border.

The free trade policy that stood at the heart of the Washington Consensus attracted much controversy, but one relatively neglected consequence of this endorsement of globalization was its opening of the region to all markets, including those of Europe. In a post-colonial age, this may represent the true termination of the Monroe Doctrine, especially since Washington and the European Union were alike reluctant to allow the opening up of their own more protected markets to competition from the south.

As a result of the recession of the 1980s and the free competition of the 1990s the 'informal economy' of Latin America grew, and nowhere more so than in

the illegal production of drugs, overwhelmingly destined for the US market (see Key quotes 16.4). Drugs became a leading policy item from the early 1980s, particularly affecting the Andean countries producing the coca plant used to manufacture cocaine and the Central American and Caribbean countries, used as conduits into the USA. From a Latin American perspective, US drug policy was consistently 'supply led' in that it prioritized eradication at source and interdiction over reducing demand, providing few real economic alternatives to the poor farmers who supplied the mafia with their illicit goods. From the US perspective, reduced supply increased the costs and so shrank demand; the imposition of conditionality was reasonable, given the aid that Congress was financing. However, Washington did move in the 1990s to reduce the attention given to government 'certification' of compliance by Latin American states, since this plainly wounded pride and was counterproductive. Whether judged by the state of bilateral relations or by flows of contraband narcotics from the region, the policy was not a success.

KEY QUOTES 16.4: THE 'DRUGS WAR': ASYMMETRY OR INEQUITY?

[Bolivian President Evo Morales] is right to complain about American imperialists criminalizing a substance that's been used for centuries in the Andes. If gringos are abusing a product made from coca leaves, that's a problem for America to deal with at home … America makes plenty of things that are bad for foreigners' health—fatty Big Macs, sugary Cokes, deadly Marlboros—but we'd never let foreigners tell us what to make and not make. The Saudis can fight alcoholism by forbidding the sale of Jack Daniels, but we'd think they were crazy if they ordered us to eradicate fields of barley in Tennessee.

(John Tierney, New York Times, 23 September 2006)

When Mexico's President Fox visited Washington in September 2001, he did so in search of a solution to the mutual problem of mass and rising immigration to the USA. When President Bush visited Mexico City in March 2007 he had the same issue at the top of his agenda. In the intervening period some five million Mexicans had crossed the border, there being nearly 50 million people of Hispanic descent living in the USA. One in six babies born in the USA had a Hispanic mother, and the total Hispanic population is projected to be 100 million in 2050 (see Key quotes 16.5).

KEY QUOTES 16.5: THE GREAT FEAR: LATIN AMERICA *WITHIN* THE USA

Americans, to varying degree, have defined the substance of their identity in terms of race, ethnicity, ideology and culture. Race and ethnicity are now largely eliminated: Americans see their country as a multiethnic, multiracial society. The 'American Creed', as initially formulated by Thomas Jefferson … however, was the product of a distinct Anglo-Protestant culture of the founding settlers of America in the 17th and 18th centuries. Key elements of that culture include: the English language; Christianity; religious commitment; English concepts of the rule of law, the responsibility of rulers, and the rights of individuals; and dissenting Protestant values of individualism, the work ethic, and the belief that humans have the ability and the duty to try to create a heaven on earth, a 'city on a hill' … In the late 20th century, however, the salience and substance of this culture was challenged by a new wave of migrants from Latin America and Asia, the popularity in intellectual and political circles of the doctrines of multiculturalism and diversity, the spread of Spanish as a second language and the Hispanization trends in American society.

(Huntington 2004: xv—xvi)

There was a positive side to this new reality. Hispanic GDP within the USA was $700 billion by 2010—bigger than those of Spain and Mexico—and a significant amount of it is returned to the region in the form of private remittances. However, it was arguable how economically efficient and equitable this was. Moreover, many immigrants were undocumented—both illegal and unable to secure the support of the US welfare system. Within the USA Hispanics were disproportionately poor and overly represented in the armed

forces, even if they had avoided the poor health and crime profiles of the African-American population they overtook as the largest minority group early in the twenty-first century.

For some conservative thinkers, such as Harvard Professor Samuel Huntington, this Hispanic diaspora posed a uniquely acute threat to the traditional US 'melting pot' and represented a 'clash of cultures' within the very borders of the USA.

Others expected this fast-developing scenario to provide a beneficial impact on both sides of the border: Hispanic middle-class employees of the State Department would introduce knowledge and sensitivity into bilateral relations, and US politicians would be more responsive to the rising Hispanic electorate. But progress was very patchy, since those Hispanics who have not grown up in Latin American countries speak the same language but often underestimate the power of nationalist sentiment. Equally, many Hispanics in the USA are not on the electoral registers, and their political profile reflects neither a blanket poverty—there is a distinct Hispanic middle class—nor the traditional social sensibilities of a society unused to Catholic values, which, for example, promote with equal energy the right to life and the right to join a trade union.

In the meantime, the new, independently minded Latin American governments elected in the first years of the new century showed every sign of moving away from the Washington Consensus, choosing which of its economic instruments they wished to maintain—largely control of inflation—and which they repudiated—largely open access for foreign companies to strategic resources. They had few extra-hemispheric options with which to test Washington, and while the Chinese market helped to underpin economic recovery, it did not represent an enduring alternative to the USA. So even the more radical regimes recognized the continuing continental asymmetry, but they refused to accept the existing political terms—and particularly the presumption of hegemony—through which this had long been expressed.

Despite the considerable enthusiasm in Latin America and amongst US Latinos for the 2008 election campaign of Barak Obama—an enthusiasm not seen since John F. Kennedy's nearly half a century earlier—expectations of a radical improvement in regional relations were soon disappointed. Apart from the predictable fact that there was minimal space for the region on Washington's war-led foreign policy agenda, Obama's appointment of Hillary Rodham Clinton as Secretary of State, and the eventual appointment of Professor Arturo Valenzuela as Assistant Secretary of State for the Americas, ensured a highly cautious, risk-averse, and low-profile defence of the status quo. At the same time, even despite the substantial Republican losses in the 2008 election, some senators, most notably Jim DeMint (Republican senator of South Carolina) used the right-wing coup in Honduras in June 2009 as a pretext to hold up Valenzuela's nomination, underscoring the important role of the upper house in foreign relations. Equally, the US pursuit of a Colombian site for alternatives to the military base at Manta, closed by the new radical government in Ecuador, sharpened conflict with Venezuela. More importantly, it showed that Washington had become distanced from Brasília, which criticized the security agreement, strongly denounced the Honduran coup, and used its temporary position in the UN Security Council to defend Iran's right to develop a nuclear power potential, opposing the US policy of sanctions. In every case, the Obama administration responded with less aggressive rhetoric than had the Bush government, but not in any substantially different manner.

The second Obama administration, which won over 70 per cent of the Latino vote in 2012, did diverge more forcefully under Secretary of State John Kerry. Following the death of President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela in 2013, Washington's policy towards a still unfriendly and increasingly crisis-ridden government in Caracas was one of calculated pragmatism and caution. One might also perceive an element of 'joined-up' policy between the region and the rest of the world, with the earlier Brazilian position on Iran converging with the international accord that Obama and Secretary Kerry subsequently fought hard to secure. Equally, the rapprochement with Cuba, which began the year after Chávez died, greatly reduced the resonance of anti-American rhetoric in the rest of the hemisphere. Of course, both policies were strongly attacked by Trump in 2016, but bipartisan congressional support looked firm enough to stall any outright change. The death of Fidel Castro removed one key opponent to improved relations.

Equally, Trump did not take aim at the peace accord agreed between the Santos government in Colombia and the FARC guerrilla group, which had been engaged in subversive operations for almost as long as the Cuban Revolution. Although the initial terms were narrowly rejected by a referendum in 2016, a rapidly revised agreement appeared to hold,

winning Santos the Nobel peace prize, perhaps in the same vein as Obama secured the award in 2009—as a sign as much of endorsement and promise as of achievement. This less noticed ending of a Cold War conflict was encouraged by Washington with quiet support of a type which suggested that both the style and substance of twentieth-century hemispheric relations could indeed be reformed. And for an incoming US president proud of his profile as a 'deal-maker', that could represent an acceptable prospect.

KEY POINTS

- The Washington Consensus was a set of orthodox liberal policies designed to stabilize the performance of Latin American economies and open them to international markets after the debt crisis of the early 1980s.
- The Consensus was a doctrine supported by the US government but practically implemented by multilateral organizations such as the IMF and World Bank, so it represented an end to the 'hemispherism' of both the Monroe Doctrine and the Roosevelt corollary.
- Aside from Central America, the Consensus replaced anti-communism as Washington's prime concern in Latin America.
- The economic recession of the 1980s and 1990s, in part prompted by the Consensus, resulted in a regional rise in drug production and emigration to the USA, issues that by 2000 had firmly displaced ideology as the key US concerns relating to Latin America.
- The first Obama administration modulated the rhetoric of US regional policy but undertook no major initiatives. The second term showed much more positive enterprise, particularly with regard to Cuba. Restoration of diplomatic relations was subject to criticism, but US business interests broadly supported improved relations.

QUESTIONS

1. Has US policy towards Latin America been consistent over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries?
2. To what degree has Europe determined the pattern of US–Latin American relations?
3. Is the USA an empire based on neo-colonialism in the western hemisphere?
4. What have been the main consequences of the Monroe Doctrine?
5. To what degree has the Latin American policy of the USA been 'idealist' in the twentieth century?
6. Have Latin American countries consistently been the passive subaltern states of the western hemisphere?
7. To what extent have multilateral organizations affected US–Latin American relations since 1945?
8. Has there been a consistent Latin American anti-Americanism?
9. To what degree is Cuba as 'exceptional' as the USA itself?
10. Has globalization finally ended the era of the Monroe Doctrine?

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A densely illustrated but finely written monograph that covers all the major issues of the bilateral relationship from an independent perspective.

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A useful liberal survey up to the Clinton presidency, aimed at students.

You can find a range of online resources to support your learning at www.oup.com/uk/cox_stokes3e/.

17

US foreign policy in Africa

Robert G. Patman

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Introduction

Despite historic ties with the continent, US ties with Africa, in the words of John Kerry, the former US Secretary of State, were 'for too long … largely rooted in meeting the challenges and the crises of a particular moment' (Kerry 2014). Throughout the Cold War, Africa was treated as a pawn in the battle between the USA and the Soviet Union, as each side attempted to limit the influence of the other. With the end of the Cold War, Africa has been characterized paradoxically by both internal conflict and state failure, and also sustained economic growth, particularly in the twenty-first century (Barton and Leke 2016). Initial hopes for a USA-led 'New World Order' in which the international community could work together to address Africa's challenges faded when the 1993 battle of Mogadishu began a period of virtual American disengagement from the continent. While limited re-engagement occurred during the second half of the 1990s, it was the events of 9/11 and the fear of state failure in Africa, acting as a breeding ground and safe haven for terrorists, that triggered a fresh American strategic focus on Africa. Growing Chinese influence in Africa, growing international competition for African resources, and the determination of the Obama administration to promote good governance in Africa has further stimulated and expanded the parameters of American engagement (Obama 2009). Nevertheless, the Obama administration's goal of 'a more peaceful, stable, and prosperous Africa' (Carson 2010a) cannot be realized without achieving 'a more secure Africa' (Kerry 2014).

US policies toward Africa, particularly since the end of the Second World War, exemplify many of the themes already discussed throughout this book. Themes that have been played out in the relationship between the USA and Africa include American exceptionalism; the foreign relations of a global hegemon; Cold War dealings with periphery states; the American post–Cold War search for a new foreign policy purpose; the post-9/11 war on terror; and the reinvigoration of American leadership through partnerships and institutions. Throughout the Cold War, Africa was an 'active bystander'—on the one hand it was peripheral to the conflict, and yet on the other hand it was affected as the USA and the Soviet Union played out their global struggle while trying to minimize the risk of nuclear confrontation. In the early post–Cold War period, President George H. W. Bush's New World Order stance meant a change in policy toward Africa as the USA went in search of a new mission, yet this quickly changed after humanitarian intervention in Somalia led to the loss of American lives. However, the twenty-first century has witnessed further changes, real and potential, to US policy. The events of 9/11, the recognition that Africa is 'a fundamental part of our interconnected world' (Obama 2009; see Key quotes 17.1), and China's increasing challenge to the USA's interests in Africa, are all drivers of a new 'forward-looking' American approach to the continent, an approach that could now in turn be reversed by the new Trump administration (Cavince 2017). (For a map, see Figure 17.1.)

Figure 17.1 Map of Africa.

This chapter proceeds in four stages. The first part considers US engagement with Africa in historical terms, particularly during the Cold War era of US–Soviet Union superpower rivalry. The second part examines the immediate post–Cold War era, in which a New World Order—a vision in which the USA and the UN could combine to establish freedom and respect for all nations—held out the possibility of positive US involvement in Africa. This section also assesses the post-Somalia period when US policy retreated to a more realist approach that linked America's engagement in Africa with perceived strategic or national interests. The last part of the second section outlines the renewal of limited US engagement between 1996 and 2001. The third section considers US Africa policy after 9/11. Consideration is given to President G. W. Bush's efforts to incorporate Africa into Washington's global strategic network as part of the new war on terror, and the fundamentally different approach of the Obama administration, which insisted that strong institutions in Africa were the key to resolving both development and security challenges in 'our interconnected world' (Obama 2009). Finally, the concluding section contends that while President Obama's call for political transformation in Africa was an ambitious long-term policy, its sustainability, at least in the near term, will depend on whether the Trump administration believes the continent should be a focus.

USA–Africa relations: history and the Cold War

Despite deep historic linkages between the USA and Africa, there is general agreement that US–Africa policies from the founding of the US in 1789 to the present have been marked by indifference at worst, and neglect at best. Africa has very often been treated as marginal in official foreign policy-making circles, compared to the time and resources allocated to other regions considered to be of greater concern (Schraeder 1993: 776).

However, as Box 17.1 makes clear, US engagement with Africa did increase with the onset of the Cold War. The Cold War brought about a fundamental change in American foreign policy. In a policy of 'selective engagement', Washington essentially treated African countries as pawns in a global strategic contest with the Soviet Union (Keller 2006: 3–4). Republican and Democratic administrations alike supported American allies on the African continent and sought to undermine African countries that were friendly towards Moscow. Economic and military assistance was directed to key allies, such as President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, the apartheid regime in South Africa, and Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, as well as anti-communist rebel organizations, like Jonas Savimbi's UNITA in Angola.

But while US engagement in Africa was largely defined by Cold War competition, developments in Africa did play a part in actually shaping Washington's containment policy, aimed at preventing the spread of communism. Nowhere was this truer than in the Horn of Africa, on the east of the continent, comprising the states of Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea, and Somalia. Having been displaced in Ethiopia by the Soviet Union, the USA (under President Jimmy Carter) was left as a bystander as Moscow launched a massive military intervention to determine the outcome of the Ethiopian–Somali war of 1977–8 (Patman 1990: 204–54). That experience helped to end the era of superpower détente, a short period in which tensions had eased, as exemplified by the signing of the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaties (SALT) aimed at reducing nuclear arsenal build-ups.

The strategic significance of Africa during the Cold War period received some institutional expression in Washington. In 1958, the State Department created a separate Bureau of African Affairs (Schraeder 1994: 16). Then, in 1960, the CIA established its own separate Africa Division within the Deputy Directorate of Operations (DDO), which had responsibility for mounting covert actions throughout the globe. However, the Defense Department was relatively late among the national security bureaucracies in acknowledging the importance of Africa. In 1982, the Office of International Security Affairs appointed a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense to head the newly created Office of African Affairs (Schraeder 1994: 18). At the same time, a number of other executive agencies became involved in the making of US Africa policy. These included the United States Agency for International Development, the Departments of Treasury and Commerce, and the US Information Agency. Sitting on top of this constellation of loosely allied organizations was the president.

BOX 17.1: PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP

As in other areas of foreign policy, the president has been the dominant influence on US policy towards Africa. At least five variables have affected presidential interest in Africa.

1. *Low level of attention paid to African issues.* Although contacts between the USA and Africa have expanded in both quantity and quality during the post-Second World War period, presidents from Harry Truman to George W. Bush traditionally have been the least interested in, and consequently have paid the least amount of attention to, Africa, relative to other regions of the world. By contrast, the Obama administration attempted to break this pattern by classifying Africa as a top US foreign policy concern.
2. *American expectation of European responsibility for Africa.* Most presidents (although in varying degrees) traditionally have looked upon Africa as a special area of influence and responsibility of the former European colonial powers. This perception has sometimes manifested itself in relatively slow American responses to some African conflicts, such as those in Somalia (1988–91), Rwanda (1994), and Sierra Leone (1999). Again, President Obama challenged this trend by saying it is high time that Africa took responsibility for shaping its own future.
3. *East–West dimension of the Africa situation.* The Cold War dimension was another element that influenced presidential attention to African issues. The threat posed by the Soviet Union and its allies to US interests in Africa was of concern to presidents from Truman to Bush Sr. Although there were variations in the assessment of the Soviet threat, all presidents during this period sought to limit Soviet influence in Africa.
4. *African-based threats to US national security.* After 9/11, the G. W. Bush administration publicly acknowledged that weak or failed states in Africa could provide a sanctuary for terrorist groups, such as al-Qaeda, that seek to target the USA. The Obama administration agreed there was a threat but argued that such states are not simply African problems—they are global security challenges that affect America, Africa, and the world.
5. *Africa as a global partner of the US.* During the second term of the Obama administration, the president emphasized a new US–Africa relationship that moved beyond the simple provision of aid to a new model of partnership between America and Africa—a partnership of equals that focuses on Africa's capacity to solve problems and grow.

(Adapted from Schraeder 1994: 12–15)

KEY POINTS

- Historically the USA has had little interest in Africa, despite the deep historical linkages shared.
- During the Cold War, US engagement with Africa increased, as the USA attempted to stop the spread of Soviet influence on the African continent while increasing US influence.
- During the Cold War, incidents in Africa also helped to shape the USA's policies towards the Soviet Union.
- A number of US departments set up divisions focused on Africa during the Cold War.

The USA and Africa in a post–Cold War world

Bush's New World Order and Africa

The end of the Cold War in the late 1980s seemed to offer an extraordinary opportunity for a policy of positive US engagement with Africa. At the beginning of the new era, the George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton administrations appeared confident about constructing a New World Order. For many observers, the decisive military victory of the US-led coalition in the Persian Gulf War of 1990–1, during which the coalition successfully repelled Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, seemed to affirm the reality of this new order. Three elements appeared central to Bush's new vision (Sloan 1991: 21–2). First was the conviction that the new order should guarantee security, defend freedom, promote democracy, and enforce the rule of law. Second was the belief that the key diplomatic and political institution for operating and managing the new order was the UN. It should be noted that the UN was the forum in which international opinion against Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait was mobilized. Third, the Bush administration anticipated an active leadership role for the USA, in partnership with the UN, in creating and maintaining this new order. The model of the Persian Gulf crisis was one of strong US leadership, albeit one underpinned by UN-authorized coalition diplomacy.

During the period 1989–92, Africa featured in Washington's vision of a New World Order. In the area of conflict resolution, the USA, Russia, Portugal, Cuba, and South Africa began working together to broker

a negotiated settlement to the Angolan civil war (Lawson 2007: 1). At the same time, the USA and Russia worked closely through the UN to bring an end to the civil war in Mozambique and facilitate the independence of Namibia. Political reform was also emphasized. After Mengistu Haile Mariam's exit from Addis Ababa in May 1991, Washington played a crucial role in establishing transitional arrangements in Ethiopia by backing an Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front takeover of the country and endorsing the Eritrean People's Liberation Front proposal for a UN-supervised referendum to decide the issue of Eritrean independence (Dagne 1991: 3). Meanwhile, the USA, Britain, and France each announced that future foreign aid to Africa would be contingent on democratization. Between 1990 and 1992, the USA delivered on this pledge by cutting off assistance to long-time Cold War allies, such as Zaire, Liberia, and the Sudan, which resisted political liberalization, and redirecting its resources to countries such as South Africa, Ethiopia, and Mozambique that were actively engaged in the democratization process.

Intervention in Somalia

However, the most visible expression of a new American approach to Africa was the 1992–3 humanitarian intervention in Somalia. In 1992, constant civil war and drought had combined to produce a catastrophic famine killing an estimated 300,000 Somalis. On 3 December 1992, the UN Security Council, in its capacity to decide on matters of international peace and security, recognizing that the situation in Somalia had become 'intolerable', authorized a US-led Unified Task Force (UNITAF) to use 'all necessary means to establish as soon as possible a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations' (UNSCR 794, 3 December 1992).

The intervention was a landmark decision for both the UN and the USA. It was the first time the Security Council had sanctioned a major enforcement action under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which legally binds all members in a theoretically sovereign state. For the USA, the offer by the outgoing administration of President George H. W. Bush to lead a UN-backed force in Somalia was an abrupt departure from previous American policy. The turnaround followed a 'heated debate'[1] within the US government and President Bush's belated recognition in July 1992 that 'something must be done'[2] about Somalia. In any event, the US decision was virtually unprecedented. It was the first time in recent memory that the USA had explicitly justified sending its troops to a foreign country, not to safeguard US strategic interests, but to perform a humanitarian mission. At the same time, Bush's decision to intervene in Somalia marked a major change in US policy toward UN peacekeeping. The administration indicated before the humanitarian intervention even began that a sizeable portion of US forces deployed in Somalia would stay on to serve as full members of the UN peacekeeping force that would replace the US-led coalition. Thus, in a clear break from the past, the USA was prepared in principle to allow its forces to operate under UN military command.

The Somali crisis highlighted seven key features of the emerging post–Cold War security environment. First, weak or failed states—that is states with little to no legitimate or functioning government and/or a government with little to no control over its territory—were now seen as the main source of threat and instability in the world; second, these new civil conflicts were typically characterized by the absence or inadequacy of legitimate governance; third, many of the 'new wars' were driven by issues of identity and often involved the mobilization of movements along ethnic, tribal, racial, and religious lines; fourth, civil conflicts such as Somalia served to stimulate calls for higher standards of governance, including the spread of democracy; fifth, the globalized mass media now had the ability—the so-called 'CNN effect'—to use their influence through raising awareness, thus helping to internationalize internal conflicts; sixth, the potential for economic and military overspill from intrastate conflicts challenged the old sovereign distinction between domestic and external policy in the field of security; and finally, the capacity of the international community to respond to major security challenges was largely determined by the stance of the USA, the sole superpower.

The retreat to 'the Mogadishu line'

But if Somalia was a paradigm for post–Cold War security, the Bush and Clinton administrations struggled to come to terms with it (see Major debates and their impact 17.1). The US-led UN operation ran into problems almost immediately and ultimately proved to be a profound disappointment. Nation building was not written into the UNITAF mandate and instead of striving to stabilize Somalia through political reform, UNITAF concentrated largely on short-term humanitarian needs.

KEY QUOTES 17.1: AFRICA AND THE US NATIONAL INTEREST

No other continent has been so consistently ignored by our policy-makers, and yet none but Europe has been so continually connected to important developments in America, from the founding of the Republic in the era of the Atlantic slave trade to the inauguration of training exercises for the new Rapid Development Force.

(Jackson, cited in Schraeder 1994)

Africa does not fit into the national security interest.

(George W. Bush, cited in Cameron 2002)

The first concern, of course, would be to make sure that Somalia does not become an al-Qaeda safe haven, it doesn't become a place from which terrorists can plot and plan.

(George W. Bush, cited in Aljazeera.Net 2006)

I see Africa as a fundamental part of our interconnected world, as partners with America on behalf of the future we want for all of our children. That partnership must be grounded in mutual responsibility and mutual respect.

(Barack Obama, Ghana, 2009)

When the UN's successor mission, the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), became embroiled in major hostilities with the warlord General Aideed's faction, Clinton's handling of the Somali crisis was singled out for fierce criticism by Republicans, such as John Bolton and Charles Krauthammer, and conservative Democrats, such as Senator Robert Byrd. They claimed the Clinton administration had abandoned the hard-headed approach of former president George H. Bush, and taken a multilateralist line that had 'no conceivable connection to the US national interest' (Bolton 1994: 56–66). These observers simply did not believe that the typical failed or failing state was geostrategically important to the USA.

Having warned it would be 'open season' on Americans all over the world if the USA pulled out of Somalia in the wake of the Black Hawk Down episode on 3 October 1993, President Clinton nevertheless proceeded to quickly announce a scheduled withdrawal of US troops by March 1994. That decision effectively ended the US–UN experiment with peace enforcement in Somalia and eventually led to the humiliating withdrawal of all UN troops from the country in March 1995 (Patman 2001: 59).

Reeling from the Somalia fiasco, President Clinton sought to quell domestic unease over US participation in future UN operations. In May 1994, the Clinton administration passed Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 25. This directive said the USA would only participate in UN peacekeeping missions if they were in the US national interest. PDD 25 signalled a clear shift away from Bush's New World Order vision and what Clinton called 'assertive multilateralism' towards a more unilateral, state-centred approach to international security (Lawson 2007: 2).

Thus, in the wake of the unsuccessful US–UN operation in Somalia, there was a determination in Washington not to cross 'the Mogadishu line' and engage in peace operations that had the potential to expand into armed nation-building actions containing the attendant risk of US casualties. The first major test of the new policy would be genocide in Rwanda, which began to unfold as PDD 25 was released. Reluctant to do anything that might involve the USA, the Clinton administration blocked the proposal made in the UN Security Council for an early deployment of UN troops in Rwanda (Johnston and Dagne 1997: 191). Requests from General Romeo Dallaire, the commander of UN forces in Rwanda whose mission was to oversee the implementation of the Abuja Accords ending the war between the government and the Rwandan Patriot Front, for reinforcements to forestall the prospect of genocide were declined, and when the genocide duly began all UN forces were quickly withdrawn. But while the Clinton administration could use PDD 25 to reject pleas for humanitarian intervention, there was the problem of the obligation to act against genocide under the Geneva Conventions, which govern the laws of war and the treatment of civilians. Consequently, the Clinton administration refused to classify the slaughter in Rwanda as genocide until events had taken their course and 800,000 people had been killed in the most barbaric circumstances. The only response from the international community to the Rwandan genocide was a very late UN-authorized intervention by France.

MAJOR DEBATES AND THEIR IMPACT 17:1: THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT?

By the early 1990s a wave of brutal internal conflicts was enveloping much of eastern Europe and the developing world. In reaction, a challenge to state sovereignty soon arose—the responsibility to protect citizens facing brutal oppression, insurgency, state failure, and genocide was seen by many as giving the right to undertake humanitarian interventions in such countries. International humanitarian law, scholarly opinions, and influential leaders all had a role to play. However, this concept was not without detractors: many in the developing world saw the doctrine of the responsibility to protect as a direct threat to their sovereignty, and for this reason the idea has never been universally accepted. The obligation to protect has been applied in US policies toward Africa in a very on-again-off-again fashion. While Somalia was a humanitarian intervention, its consequences led to PDD 25, and in the aftermath the Tutsi population of Rwanda suffered genocide. Many other instances across Africa have shown that the responsibility to protect is a doctrine which is accepted but not often applied by the developed world (see International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty 2001).

US concerns about conflicts in Africa, and the perceived risk of becoming involved when no American national interests were deemed to be stake, had several other consequences. PDD 25 called for regional organizations to take on more of the peacekeeping burden, with UN Security Council endorsement. This move served to reduce US engagement in Africa, where many of the UN peacekeeping missions were deployed. The USA and the UN were already supporting the peacekeeping efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Liberia. US direct support to the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) between 1991 and 1996 averaged about $15 million annually. The costs of the operation, around $1 billion, were largely shouldered by Nigeria (Malan 1999).

The period of retreat from Africa also affected US support for democratization on the continent. While the Clinton administration did apply some serious pressure on the autocratic regimes in Sudan and Nigeria to move towards political reform in 1995, there was a tacit recognition in Washington that political liberalization was associated with security problems in several countries in the mid-1990s. These included the Central African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, Lesotho, and most strikingly Rwanda's neighbour Burundi. In July 1996, the democratic government in Burundi was overthrown in a military coup which returned former president 3Pierre Buyoya to power. But the Clinton administration supported the new military government in the expectation that Buyoya would be able to establish greater security in the country.

Furthermore, US assistance to Africa continued to decline. The decline had begun in the late 1980s with the virtual elimination of Security Assistance and Economic Support Funds to former Cold War allies. In 1995, the US Congress sought to reorganize and substantially trim the existing US foreign assistance programmes. Some members of Congress questioned the logic of assisting Africa in the post–Cold War era. But congressional supporters of African aid opposed the restructuring initiative and managed to limit the severity of the proposed new cuts (Copson 2004).

The renewal of limited US engagement in Africa

A period of renewed but limited US engagement in Africa began in the first year of Clinton's second term of office. It reflected the gradual recognition that in a globalizing world the USA could not afford to strictly condition its involvement in Africa according to PDD 25 criteria. The lessons of Somalia, Rwanda, and Liberia were that the civil wars of the 1990s could be major international security problems; US indifference to such challenges ran the risk of harming Washington's international standing; and the USA could not realistically expect African states to contain instability entirely on their own.

Re-engagement in African security

In its second term, the Clinton administration followed a two-pronged approach to Africa that occupied a middle-ground position somewhere between the narrow confines of PDD 25 and a broader conception of human security that sought to reconcile the security and welfare of the individual (including their economic well-being) with more traditional security concerns. First, the Clinton administration sought to address security threats emanating from Africa, including conflicts between and within states, terrorism, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, trafficking in

drugs, and illicit arms. Confronted with the possibility that Burundi would follow Rwanda's descent into civil war, the Clinton administration proposed in October 1996 the establishment of an African Crisis Response Force (ACRF) (Howe 2001: 248–51). It was proposed that ACRF would consist of a standing force of 5000 African troops, trained and equipped by Western countries, which would be capable of rapid deployment for UN-authorized peacekeeping operations. But the plan received a very cool reception from virtually all quarters in Africa. To countries like South Africa and Nigeria, ACRF seemed to be a case of the Clinton administration seeking to exercise power in Africa without accepting responsibility in the process.

Consequently, the ACRF concept was replaced in late 1996 by the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI). This new initiative was essentially a bilateral training programme, which was intended to improve the capabilities of African forces participating in peacekeeping. While South Africa and Nigeria showed little interest, other countries, starting with Malawi, Senegal, and Uganda, agreed to accept US training and equipment. However, critics charged that ACRI-provided equipment was often used against internal and external adversaries rather than in peacekeeping. During the transition from the Clinton to the George W. Bush administration, ACRI evolved into the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) programme. The latter focuses on 'training the trainer', delivering programmes to meet the needs of specific recipient countries, and training for peace enforcement as well as peacekeeping. Between 1997 and 2005, the USA spent $121 million to train 10,000 troops from Benin, Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, and Senegal (Lawson 2007: 4).

Despite these measures, the security threats faced by Africa, and the USA in Africa, worsened. In August 1998, the US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya were bombed by al-Qaeda terrorists, killing 253 people. The al-Qaeda terrorists suspected of involvement were believed to have had links with Somalia and the Sudan (Rothchild 2006: 250). Furthermore, a bloody border dispute between two US allies, Ethiopia and Eritrea, erupted in 1998 and killed more than 70,000 people over the next two years. The civil war in Angola resumed; and a civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) escalated, killing more than one million people and eventually involving seven African countries supporting the government of the DRC or its opponents. Moreover, in 1999, at a time when the Clinton administration endorsed a humanitarian intervention by NATO in Kosovo, Sierra Leone endured a brutal civil war involving rebel groups opposed to a democratically elected government. Eventually, the British, not the USA, intervened militarily to re-establish some semblance of order in Sierra Leone (Keller 2006: 7–14).

Re-engagement in poverty, trade, and health

As Box 17.2 shows, President Clinton's administration was crucial in bringing the AIDS pandemic into the global political arena. However, Clinton's policies in regard to the socio-economic plight of the African continent went beyond this. The Clinton administration sought to accelerate Africa's integration into the global economy. A key political initiative in this area was the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), a US Trade Act that was passed in 2000 despite opposition from domestic constituencies in the USA that feared increased textile exports from Africa. AGOA provided $500 million in support of economic development to African countries embracing free market principles, the rule of law, and political pluralism. It also provided preferential access to the US market for African countries deemed eligible. Both Presidents Clinton and Bush designated most African countries as AGOA eligible. As a policy instrument, AGOA was the embodiment of the 'trade not aid' rhetoric of the mid to late 1990s in which American and African leaders, such as Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, agreed that enhanced access to the American market would prove more effective in facilitating economic growth and development in Africa than decades of foreign assistance.

While the Office of the US Trade Representative hailed the success of AGOA after its implementation, critics charged that there was little cause for celebration. The provisions of AGOA included numerous protections for American producers who might be harmed by competition from Africa. At the same time, oil exports have always accounted for the majority of African exports to the USA. Although the USA has a clear interest in increasing its international market share in African oil exports, the oil sector by itself is unlikely to stimulate more broad-based economic growth and development in Africa, especially when non-oil African exporters find it so hard to break into the American market. In other words, critics argue that AGOA served more than anything as a vehicle for the

BOX 17.2: PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVES ON HIV/AIDS

Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama have all taken a proactive role in combating HIV/AIDS, a disease which has decimated the population of the African continent. According to a report produced by the National Intelligence Council (NIC) in 2000, sub-Saharan Africa accounted for four-fifths of the 22 million deaths from AIDS since the beginning of the epidemic around 1980. The report added that AIDS was devastating African countries, depriving them of the educated and skilled individuals required to build democratic governments, professional militaries, and free market economies.

The Clinton administration was instrumental in moving the HIV/AIDS pandemic onto the international agenda. AIDS in Africa was the focus of the US presidency of the UN Security Council in January 2000. Vice-President Gore emphasized that 'AIDS is not just a humanitarian crisis. It is a security crisis—because it threatens not just individual citizens, but the very institutions that define and defend the character of a society' (Al Gore, quoted in Cameron 2002: 168). Before Clinton left office, he signed the Global AIDS and Tuberculosis Relief Act.

President G. W. Bush announced in September 2001 a $200 million contribution to the UN AIDS campaign and committed the USA to an active role in fighting the disease (Cameron 2002: 168–9). Prior to his 2003 visit to Africa, Bush announced the President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), a commitment of $15 billion over five years to fight this disease. Then, in May 2007, Bush requested a doubling of funding to fight AIDS, with up to $30 billion being invested over the following five years (Office of the US Global AIDS Coordinator 2007). President Obama said PEPFAR was 'one of the success stories of the George W. Bush administration' (Cooper 2015) and pledged in 2009 to spend $63 billion over six years to continue combating AIDS and other public health challenges in Africa such as malaria, tuberculosis, and polio. According to President Obama, America is 'is called to act by our conscience but also by our common interest' (Obama 2009) in halting the spread of disease in an interconnected world.

USA to consolidate its own strategic interests around Nigeria and South Africa, two of the bigger economic players in Africa, and, to a lesser degree, mineral-rich countries such as Angola, Uganda, and the Sudan (Cheru 2006: 219–22). To a degree, the numbers back up such claims. Records show a remarkable rise in US imports of products from four African nations in particular since the implementation of AGOA, with only slight changes for the remainder of the continent. The total value of imports from Nigeria, Algeria, Angola, and South Africa almost tripled between 2000 and 2006. For Algeria alone imports increased almost sixfold, while Nigerian imports make up well over one-third of all US imports from Africa as of 2006 (source: US Department of Trade and Commerce).

Re-engagement on an official level

Another sign of renewed American interest was the flurry of visits to Africa by high-level officials from Washington. President Clinton spent two weeks in Africa in August 1998; Madeleine Albright, the secretary of state, visited the continent three times between 1997 and 2000; Richard Holbrooke visited the continent in December 2000 in his capacity as US Ambassador to the UN; and Colin Powell, the secretary of state for the first George W. Bush administration, paid an official visit to Africa within five months of assuming his new position in January 2001. To some extent, the increased political engagement with Africa reflected the lobbying efforts of the congressional Black Caucus and other African-American groups. Indeed, Clinton took several members of the Caucus with him on his 1998 trip to Africa when he made a major effort to build bridges with the continent (Cameron 2002: 170). He was the first US president to publicly admit that 'the United States has not always done the right thing by Africa', and in a brief visit to Rwanda, Clinton apologized for American inaction during the 1994 massacres, implying that US military power could be deployed to prevent future genocides (Schabas 1999: 6–7). It should be added that the Clinton administration had firmly supported the establishment of a UN tribunal charged with the indictment and prosecution of individuals accused of crimes against humanity and genocide in Rwanda.

Despite the increased US involvement in Africa, there was little sign that President George W. Bush would carry on where the Clinton administration left off. US national interests were central to Clinton's policies in Africa after the Somali fiasco, but he demonstrated, particularly in his second administration, a certain flexibility to balance US needs and objectives with an African environment that had been profoundly changed by the end of the Cold War. But

while Bush appointed African-Americans as his main foreign policy advisers, he did not seem to see Africa as a priority for US foreign policy. Initially, President George W. Bush strongly rejected the notion of 'nation building', embraced the traditional view that security was fundamentally determined by the military means of sovereign states, and advocated 'a distinctly American internationalism'.

KEY POINTS

- The end of the Cold War gave rise to the opportunity to drastically reassess US policy toward Africa.
- At the beginning of the 1990s President George H. W. Bush envisioned a New World Order, in which the UN (with strong leadership by the USA) would take a more proactive role, particularly in conflict resolution and peacekeeping.
- This New World Order came to a dramatic halt after the USA's disastrous intervention in Somalia, and President Clinton's issuing of PDD 25.
- By President Clinton's second term (1996–2000) the USA began to re-engage with Africa as it became clear that failing states were a threat to international security. During this time a series of training programmes for African troops was undertaken by the USA, and AGOA was implemented in the hope of integrating Africa into the world economy.

The USA and Africa after 9/11

From Bush's war on terror to Obama's anti-ISIS coalition

After the terrorist attacks of 9/11 the Bush administration revised its approach towards Africa and acknowledged that the continent was a major strategic concern for the USA in the war on terror, in which the USA and its allies sought to reduce the ability of terrorist organizations to function and carry out terrorist activities. Previous opposition to nation building was quietly de-emphasized as the Bush administration now recognized that weak or failing states could be a security threat to the USA. Such societies were perceived as potential safe havens for terrorist groups to plan, prepare, and launch attacks against Western targets. The 2002 National Security Strategy asserted that 'America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by falling ones' (Bush 2002: 1–31). Africa was seen as a prime target for terrorist organizations. According to a Pentagon official forty out of forty-eight countries in sub-Saharan Africa were not in control of their borders and could harbour terrorists (Malan 2002). The belief that Africa is susceptible to terrorist penetration also brought a new but narrowly based recognition that poverty and injustice could play a part in this situation.

With respect to the perceived threat of international terrorism in Africa, there were three main Bush policy initiatives: the deployment of the Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) in December 2002; the Pan-Sahel Initiative/Trans-Sahel Counter-Terrorism Initiative, which also began in late 2002; and the establishment of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) in February 2007. CJTF-HOA, staffed by about 2000 US troops in Djibouti, had the mission of 'detecting, disrupting and ultimately defeating transnational terrorist groups operating in the region—denying safe havens, external support and material assistance for transnational terrorism in the region' (US Central Command, quoted in Lawson 2007: 7). The Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI) was a more indirect effort to boost the border defence capabilities of countries to the west of the Horn: Chad, Niger, Mali, and Mauritania. AFRICOM is responsible for US military relations with fifty-three African nations, and its creation acknowledged, in the words of US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice, that Africa had a 'pivotal' role in the war on terror (Hentz 2004).

At the same time, the 2006 National Security Strategy envisaged, amongst other things, 'focused attention' on anchor states such as South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, and Ethiopia to bolster Africa's resistance to transnational threats. But this approach proved problematic in practice. In December 2006, for example, the Bush administration backed the expansion of an Ethiopian troop presence in stateless Somalia to oust the Islamic Courts Union and its militias from the capital, Mogadishu. Instead of buttressing the weak but internationally recognized Transitional Federal Government, the Ethiopian presence and US air strikes against al-Qaeda targets sparked national outrage and enabled Eritrea—a foe of Ethiopia's since their border war of 1998–2000—to arm and co-ordinate an insurgency that quickly spread in 2007 to the relatively peaceful north-east of Somalia and generally boosted the position of al-Qaeda and other foreign Islamist militants in the country (Patman 2007).

Barack Obama had campaigned against George W. Bush's ideas and approach to national security, and his election victory in November 2008 brought a more holistic US approach towards Africa. This shift reflected Obama's personal connection with the continent and also his conviction that in the twenty-first century the world would be shaped by what happens in Africa as well as what happens in Moscow, Beijing, or Washington. According to President Obama, American policy in Africa was now based on a simple truth: 'Governments that respect, that govern by consent and not coercion, are more prosperous, they are more stable, and more successful than governments that do not' (Obama 2009). In a blunt speech to Ghana's parliament, Obama said democracy is the key to Africa's renaissance: 'That is the ingredient which has been missing in far too many places, for far too long. That's the change that can unlock Africa's potential. And that is a responsibility that can only be met by Africans' (Obama 2009). In other words, US policy and African countries should address the causes of state failure in Africa—authoritarian and unrepresentative government—as well as its symptoms—genocide and terrorism. Ultimately, then, the Obama team believed that if Africa got the politics right, stability and development would follow. On this view, in the words of secretary of state John Kerry, the 'nations in Africa, like nations all over the world, are strongest when citizens have a say, when citizens' voices can be a part of the political process, when they have a stake in their nation's success' (Kerry 2014).

Certainly, the Obama team pursued a broader level of diplomatic engagement with Africa than previously. In his first term, President Obama visited Ghana, hosted a lunch for 26 African heads of state at the UN General Assembly, launched a Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) in 2010 (Obama 2014) and met in the US with government officials of Liberia, Tanzania, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, and South Africa. Meanwhile, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Kenya, Angola, South Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Liberia, and Cape Verde; Vice-President Joe Biden visited Kenya and South Africa; and the US Ambassador to the UN, Susan Rice, visited Liberia and Rwanda. During the second term of the Obama administration, the president visited Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, and Ethiopia, while Secretary of State John Kerry visited the DRC, Ethiopia, Angola, South Sudan, Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, and Nigeria. In August 2014, President Obama hosted the first ever US–Africa summit in Washington DC to build closer ties. More than 40 African heads of state and government participated in the discussions, with economic ties occupying a prominent place on the agenda (Kerry 2014). According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), three of the ten fastest growing economies in the world in 2015 were located in Africa (Barton and Leke 2016).

But Kerry recognized that 'a new Africa will not emerge without becoming a more secure Africa' (Kerry 2014). To this end, the Obama administration devoted considerable efforts in Africa to 'disrupting, dismantling and eventually defeating' the perceived threat of al-Qaeda (White House 2012) and the increasing challenge of so-called Islamic State. The latter emerged as a significant danger in both Syria and Iraq after 2012, and the Obama leadership responded in September 2014 by forming a global coalition of more than sixty countries to eliminate what was seen as a formidable terror threat. The Obama administration's 2015 National Security Strategy declared, among other things, that violent extremists fighting governments in Somalia, in Nigeria, and across the Sahel all 'pose threats to innocent civilians, regional stability and our national security.' (Blanchard 2015). While around 2000 US troops are based at Djibouti, the Obama team emphasized the importance of strengthening the military capabilities of Africa's armed forces in this security environment rather than increasing the American footprint in military operations on the continent.

Case study: Boko Haram's Islamist insurgency and Obama's anti-ISIS campaign

Boko Haram became well known internationally after it began its violent insurgency in north-east Nigeria in 2009 with the aim of creating an Islamic state. In 2011, Boko Haram apparently joined the ranks of al-Qaeda-affiliated groups after the August bombing of the United Nations Headquarters in Abuja, in which 23 people died and several others were injured (Murray and Nossiter 2011). But on 7 March 2015, Boko Haram formally pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda's rival, the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Within days, the ISIS leadership indicated that it accepted Boko Haram as an ally. Overall, the Boko–ISIS

alliance appeared to be a significant development as it internationalized a conflict in West Africa and also provided a new front to attack countries taking part in the US-led coalition that was set up, in the words of President Obama, to 'degrade and ultimately destroy' ISIS (Obama 2014).

While it is estimated Boko Haram have killed more than 15,000 people since 2009, it has not directly attacked US interests and has deep roots in Nigeria's Christian–Muslim divide, which long predates the emergence of the ISIS threat. Those factors have helped to fuel differences within the US over how best to combat the group, and even how to characterize it.

On the one hand, a significant number of US officials in the intelligence community and government have been sceptical of any meaningful connection between Boko Haram and ISIS. According to this perspective, relations between the two organizations are not as close as they appear and there is little evidence of operational or financial links. John Campbell, US ambassador to Nigeria during the George W. Bush administration, warned the Obama administration to resist characterizing Boko Haram as simply another foe in the global war on terrorism, since the group's grievances were primarily local (Campbell 2014).

On the other hand, some US officials and politicians have worried that Boko Haram could shift from a regional campaign of suicide bombings, terror, and crime to striking international targets. US Senator Chris Murphy, a Foreign Relations Committee member, said that whatever its cooperation with ISIS, Boko Haram is so deadly that Nigeria and its neighbours should get US help to crush the group (Landay et al 2016). There have been periodic but largely unconfirmed reports of cooperation between Boko Haram and ISIS's Libyan branch.

In practice, the Obama administration's stance towards Boko Haram fell somewhere between these competing perspectives on US policy towards the group. In 2014, the US supplied the Nigerian army with trucks and equipment but blocked the sale of Cobra helicopters. However, Washington sent some eighty military personnel to Nigeria after Boko Haram kidnapped 276 schoolgirls in Chibok (Thurston 2015) Then, on 24 September 2015, the White House announced a military aid package for African allies fighting Boko Haram. The package included up to $45 million for training and other support for Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria (Edwards 2015).

A month later, the US counter-terrorist strategy towards Boko Haram involved a deployment of 300 US troops to Cameroon with the approval of the Cameroonian government. Their primary mission was to provide intelligence support (Al Jazeera 2015) and overseeing the transfer of US military vehicles to the Cameroonian army to bolster their fight against Boko Haram. In 2016 US personnel were also involved in drone operations from Garoua to help provide intelligence in the region to assist local forces, and there were additional drone operations based out of Niger (Judson 2015). Altogether, since 2014, American security assistance to Nigeria and neighbouring states threatened by Boko Haram has dwarfed the aid given for governance, human rights, education, and rebuilding infrastructure.

While the Obama administration often spoke of local capacity-building as a core element of its engagement with African militaries, the arrival of US troops in Cameroon signalled that Washington was prepared to modify this approach in order to address the serious nature of the Boko Haram threat (Thurston 2015).

Conflict resolution, aid, and trade

Regarding US support for conflict resolution in Africa, the response of the G. W. Bush administration to the Liberian crisis in 2003 and to what it called 'genocide' in Darfur, Sudan, in 2004 could be described as cautious. According to Letitia Lawson, these two cases indicate 'some recovery from the Somalia Syndrome, but also [demonstrate] its continuing influence' (Lawson 2007: 5). In the case of Liberia, the Bush administration came under heavy pressure internationally to intervene as rebel forces began surrounding Monrovia in summer 2003. The Bush administration eventually agreed to send a peacekeeping force but only after Liberria's president Charles Taylor resigned and left the country. Despite the historical connection between the USA and Liberia, the Bush administration committed only a small number of US peacekeepers and then only briefly. However, it did provide monetary and other forms of support for Nigeria to take a lead peacekeeping role, which reflected the administration's commitment to assisting African states in leading regional peacekeeping endeavours. The crisis in Darfur began in 2003 with a local uprising against what many in the province felt were biased policies and neglect by the government in Khartoum. Consequently 'Arab' Janjaweed militia forces began

methodically evicting 'African' farmers from their land, with widespread reports of killing, raping, and the burning of villages. Within a year, US Secretary of State Colin Powell went to Sudan to investigate the situation and declared upon his return that genocide had indeed occurred in Darfur. But as a contracting party to the Geneva Conventions, the US largely confined its actions to demanding a full UN investigation into Darfur and providing diplomatic and financial support for the African Union (AU) to facilitate a negotiated settlement to the conflict (Lawson 2007: 5).

In contrast, the Obama administration appeared more committed to working with African states and the international community to address conflicts on the continent. President Obama has frankly acknowledged that for many Africans 'conflict is a part of life' and this is 'a millstone around Africa's neck' (Obama 2009). But the administration said America 'must stand up to inhumanity in our midst [in Africa]', and would use diplomacy, technical assistance, and logistical support to do so. These efforts have been evident in a number of hot-spots.

In South Sudan, the Obama administration responded to the outbreak of civil war in this newly independent country in 2013 by stressing that both sides must abide and implement the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. Having helped 'birth' South Sudan in 2011, the US warned both President Salva Kiir and his rival, former president Riek Machar, that continuing violence 'will completely destroy what they claim they are fighting for' (Kerry 2014). In the strife-torn DRC, the Obama leadership went beyond the actions of previous administrations in trying to decrease violence. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was deployed to the country in 2009 and her successor, John Kerry, chaired a UN Security Council summit on the DRC, and Senators Russ Feingold and James Swan were appointed as US special envoy and ambassador to the DRC respectively to re-energize peace efforts. But despite efforts by Obama and his officials to halt Rwandan support for the rebel M23 militia, relatively was little was achieved to advance peace (Tampa 2014).

Meanwhile, the Obama administration was the largest financial contributor to the AU peacekeeping operation in Somalia and provided support in the form of equipment—including drones, which were used to assassinate Islamist militants—as well as logistical support, advice, and training to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to bolster its decade-long struggle against al-Shabaab, which has links with both al-Qaeda and ISIS (Gaffey 2015). Furthermore, in Mali, the Obama administration reacted to the seizure of power by radical Islamists in the northern part of the country by involving itself in the management of the crisis (Busch 2013). This involvement was intended to thwart the possibility of a safe haven for 'al-Qaeda in the Maghreb' in northern Mali (Orellana 2016). In addition, following the outbreak of civil war in the Central African Republic in 2012 and the adoption of UNSC Resolution 2127, which authorized France and the AU to 'take all necessary measures' to protect civilians and to disarm the militias (Arieff 2014), the Obama administration actively supported this intervention. Washington supported the French and African deployments by offering transport and providing non-lethal equipment and pre-deployment training for the African troops (Arieff 2014). For the Obama team, the major concern again was to stabilize the situation and prevent the Central African Republic becoming a sanctuary for Islamist terrorists (Welz 2014: 609).

With respect to aid, some differences between the two administrations are also evident. The Bush administration launched the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) initiative in 2003. It called for economic and political reforms in developing countries as a precondition for new additional aid. The USA pledged to increase its core development assistance by 50 per cent over the next three years, resulting in a projected annual increase of $5 billion by 2006 (The White House 2002). While the Millennium initiative represents a step in the direction of recognizing the link between poverty, weak governance, and terrorism, it was slow to actually begin committing funds and to date falls far short of what is required. By the end of 2008, twenty-five countries were eligible for MCA funding, of which nineteen were African, and the MCA had actually signed agreements with eight African countries (Lesotho, Mali, Mozambique, Tanzania, Madagascar, Cape Verde, Benin, and Ghana). These figures suggested the scope of the MCA initiative in Africa is limited by political conditions defined by Washington (Carmody 2005: 97–120). However, as related in Box 17.2, President George W. Bush launched the largest ever public health campaign focused on one single disease, namely HIV/AIDS, and this had a hugely beneficial impact on a continent severely affected by this cruel disease. It was a positive legacy that the Obama administration embraced and built on (The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief 2017), though these initiatives also provoked controversy (see Controversies 17.1).

CONTROVERSIES 17.1: TRADE, PHARMACEUTICALS, AND HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTIONS

While Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama have taken measures to combat HIV/AIDS to and integrate Africa into the world economy, a number of controversies and stumbling blocks remain.

Today drug cocktails are available which, if taken appropriately, can transform HIV/AIDS from a virtual death sentence into a chronic disease—in the developed world HIV patients' lifespans have improved exponentially. However, these drugs are still costly; in 2002 the average cost of annual treatment in the USA was $14,000–$34,000 per patient depending on the stage of the disease (CNN.com 2002), which is wholly unaffordable for the majority of regions where HIV/AIDS is most prevalent, particularly the least developed countries. Pharmaceutical companies, many based in the USA, are resistant to significant price reductions in developing countries, given the high cost of research and development of their products. Nevertheless, a loophole in international trade law has allowed an industry of generic anti-retroviral drugs to spring up, and developing countries have access to these treatments at far lower prices, around $300 per year. Despite this, for the majority of Africans treatment is still too expensive. Sub-Saharan Africa is more heavily affected by HIV and AIDS than any other region of the world. An estimated 22.5 million people are living with HIV in the region—around two-thirds of the global total. In 2009 around 1.3 million people died from AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa and 1.8 million people became infected with HIV (AVERT 2011).

At the same time, US trade policy has been heavily criticized in regard to access and fairness for developing countries. Despite steps forward such as AGOA, protectionist policies remain and developing nations find it impossible to compete and gain access to US markets for many of their primary products. Without a dramatic transformation in US and EU trade policies, and a successful end to the current Doha round of trade negotiations on trade liberalization, developing countries in Africa will have little chance of improving their economic situation through trade.

Finally, the question of humanitarian interventions by the USA in African conflicts has been highly controversial. The cases of Somalia and Rwanda exemplify this. The feature earlier in this chapter, Major debates and their impact 17.1, outlined some of the issues at stake. A number of questions remain: (1) Should the USA intervene to protect the lives of civilians in other countries when it is not deemed to be in 'the national interest'? (2) Do the USA and the international community have the right to intervene against the wishes of the government of a sovereign state in order to protect the lives of civilians? (3) Should the USA intervene without the authorization of the UN Security Council?

The Obama administration said it 'can and should do more' to tackle Africa's poverty and relative isolation in the global economy. But any commitment, Obama said, must be greater than annual infusions of foreign aid. It must be based on partnership, not patronage, and help Africa build the capacity on the ground for transformation so that such aid will not be needed in the future (Obama 2009). In 2009, the Obama administration announced a new $3.5 billion food security initiative, Feed the Future, which would assist 12 African countries that were engaged in modernizing their agricultural sectors. This initiative would supply new methods and technologies to African farmers, rather than simply sending American producers or goods to Africa, and was intended to help stimulate 'a Green Revolution in African agriculture' (Carson 2010b) and encourage greater regional integration on the continent. In 2010, the US became the first nation to accredit an ambassador to the new East Africa Community. At the same time, the Obama team built on the aid initiative of the previous administration by concluding MCA compacts with three more African countries: Burkina Faso, Namibia, and Senegal (Millennium Challenge Account 2010).

Furthermore, the Obama administration made it clear that Africa needed more trade and investment. That meant America should do more to open its market to goods and services from Africa, but it also meant that African governments should curb corruption, enforce the rule of law, and deliver results for their people. In the words of Secretary of State Clinton: 'This is not just good governance—it's also about good business' (Rice 2009). In particular, the Obama administration wants African countries to maximize the opportunities created by AGOA, a trade preference programme that was intended to boost both the volume and the diversity of US trade with sub-Saharan Africa. Certainly, US–African trade turnover has steadily increased since 2001, the first full year of AGOA implementation. In the last year of the G. W. Bush administration in 2008, trade turnover between the US and Africa was $151.8 billion. In September 2015, AGOA was renewed for a further ten years. However, two-way trade steadily fell during the years of the Obama administration. In 2016,

US–African trade turnover stood at $44.3 billion (US Census Bureau 2016). Much of this trade was in textiles and transportation equipment.

So why has Obama's new partnership with Africa been so disappointing in terms of trade? First, the US economy was affected by the worst economic recession since the 1930s and this impacted on trade relations with Africa to some degree. Given a challenging economic environment, there has been little incentive for the Obama team to reduce or dismantle subsidies for US agriculture that distort prices for African farmers. Cotton subsidies, for example, lower the international price, impoverishing cotton-growing countries such as Benin, Ivory Coast, and Mali (Pace 2011). Second, Obama's approach was ambitious and cannot be expected to generate immediate economic results. The fact that two-thirds of sub-Saharan African nations in 2009 implemented reforms to improve their business environments increased their capacity to diversify trade relations. And with the American demand for oil from the continent sharply declining, the import of other goods from Africa remained quite modest. The same could be said for American exports to Africa, which have been relatively insignificant (Williams 2015).

Third, the rise of China as a global power and, in particular, as a prominent economic and diplomatic actor in Africa affected America's relations with the continent. China's trade turnover with Africa recorded $10 billion in 2000. By 2014, the figure had grown to $220 billion (Xinhua 2015) and China is now Africa's largest trading partner. Chinese foreign direct investment in Africa has grown equally dramatically from about $50 million annually between the mid-1990s and 2002 (Saunders 2006: 38–24) to $26 billion in 2013 (Knowledge@Wharton 2016). In stark contrast to the USA's approach to Africa, China maintains a policy of strict non-interference in the internal affairs of its African partners, and seeks mutually beneficial engagement, not good governance. Thus, Chinese involvement in Africa threatens to substantially reduce the leverage of the USA and its Western allies, and may have undermined to some degree the political and economic reform agenda advanced by the Obama administration. In 2009, for example, during the climate summit in Copenhagen the White House was caught off guard when several African countries voted with China and not the US. But it should not be forgotten that the first-ever US–Africa Leaders Summit in 2014 generated the US–Africa Business Forum, an annual meeting consisting of senior African officials with executives of major companies that seeks to develop business opportunities (Pham 2016).

KEY POINTS

- After 9/11 the Bush administration revised its policies toward Africa, with the recognition that weak or failing states could be potential safe havens for terrorist organizations.
- This revision of policy led to two main security initiatives: GJTF-HOA and PSI.
- Obama campaigned against Bush's approach to national security and his election significantly expanded US policy parameters in Africa.
- The central focus of the Obama agenda in Africa was the promotion of good governance and democratic institutions.
- The Obama vision of a US–Africa partnership has potentially been complicated by America's diminishing dependence on African oil and growing Chinese influence on the African continent.

Conclusion

While Africa has generally been on the periphery of the USA's foreign policy agenda, the events of 9/11 and the advent of the Obama administration combined to significantly enhance the profile of Africa in American diplomacy. After the attacks on the twin towers, the Bush administration recognized that Africa was part of the battleground for its global war on terror. From 2009, the Obama administration went much further than the Bush administration in the realignment of US Africa policy. Africa was said to be an essential part of an interconnected world and President Obama called for a new partnership based on 'mutual responsibility' (Obama 2009). This approach elevated Africa as a US foreign policy concern, but also raised the bar in how US policy success was defined in Africa. The Obama administration's call for political transformation in

Africa was many ways overdue and sensible, but it raised hopes that have yet to be fulfilled. On one hand, the Obama agenda in Africa had to compete with other pressing US foreign policy concerns such as winding down the Iraq war, fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan, overseeing relations with China, and managing tense relations with Russia. On the other hand, despite the difficulties, the impact of the Obama strategy in Africa should not be discounted. Given that there are no easy alternative policy options for the White House in Africa, President Obama's focus on political reform and economic growth on the continent sat comfortably with the values of America's democratic system at home, and a rapidly globalizing world that continues to challenge the legitimacy of authoritarian regimes in the twenty-first century.

KEY POINTS

- While 9/11 led to a change in US Africa policy, the Bush administration largely viewed Africa as a new battleground in the global war on terror.
- In the post-9/11 period it became evident there was a gulf between the Bush team's national security concerns in Africa and an environment in which many Africans faced multiple interlinked threats.
- Despite difficulties, Obama's 'tough love' approach towards Africa—elevating Africa as a foreign policy concern while demanding more democratization there—was distinctive in terms of US foreign policy and owed a lot to President Obama's family connection with Africa.

QUESTIONS

1. Why was Africa important during the Cold War?
2. How did Africa shape the course of the Cold War? What particular incidents were important in this?
3. How did US policies toward Africa change in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War?
4. What were the implications of the Somali intervention for US policy towards Africa and its foreign policy more generally?
5. How did the USA re-engage with Africa in the mid to late 1990s? Give specific examples. Do you think it was successful in its efforts?
6. Why did the events of 9/11 change President G. W. Bush's attitude toward Africa, and how was this manifested?
7. What were some of the deficiencies in policies under Presidents Clinton and George W. Bush to reduce poverty through the mechanisms of trade and aid?
8. Do you agree with President Obama's view that 'Africa doesn't need strongmen, it needs strong institutions'?
9. Evaluate the effectiveness of the Obama administration's efforts to counter the rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria.
10. Did the Obama administration's focus on good governance in Africa diminish or enhance the Chinese challenge to American interests on the continent?

FURTHER READING

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A thoughtful, well-organized, and insightful assessment of US policy in a geo-strategic area.

ENDNOTES

1. Ambassador Frank G. Wisner, former Under Secretary of State for International Security Affairs, interview with the author, 1 November 1999.
2. Walter Kansteiner, former Director of African Affairs on the National Security Council staff, interview with the author, 8 November 1999.

You can find a range of online resources to support your learning at www.oup.com/uk/cox_stokes3e/.

SECTION 5

Key Issues

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Global terrorism

Paul Rogers

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Introduction: the 9/11 attacks

At 8.46 am on 11 September 2001, American Airlines Flight 11, a Boeing 767, crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York. The immediate belief was that this was a horrifying accident, not least because there had been a similar incident in 1945 when a military aircraft crashed into the Empire State Building. However, sixteen minutes after the North Tower was struck, United Airlines Flight 175, also a Boeing 767, struck the South Tower. This was followed at 9.37 am by American Airlines Flight 77, a Boeing 757, crashing into the Department of Defense headquarters, the Pentagon, in Washington, DC. Just under half an hour later, United Airlines Flight 93, also a Boeing 757, crashed into a field in Pennsylvania, after passengers had attempted to take over the plane from hijackers. Both of the World Trade Center towers collapsed, and the toll in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania was 2973 people killed and 24 missing presumed dead.

Within minutes of the North Tower being struck, live television coverage was available throughout the United States and the rest of the world, and tens of millions of Americans saw the towers collapse. The impact has been compared with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, but many would argue that it was substantially greater (see Box 18.1). The administration of President George W. Bush responded to the atrocity with great vigour, starting what was termed the 'global

war on terror'. All four planes had been taken over by people associated with the radical Islamist group al-Qaeda, and the Bush administration made clear its intention to bring those behind the attacks to justice. This would clearly involve punishing the Taliban regime in Afghanistan if it did not cooperate, since it was harbouring the leaders of al-Qaeda.

BOX 18.1 9/11 AND PEARL HARBOR

The shock of the 9/11 atrocities to the people of the United States was so great that many commentators compared them to the only other surprise attack against the US of any magnitude—the Japanese attack on the US naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on 7 December 1941. That attack left over 2400 people dead and more than 1000 injured, and brought the United States into the Second World War, but it had less immediate impact in at least four respects.

- The attacker was another country with which there was already a state of tension—risk of a war against Japan already existed.
- The attack was directed against a major naval base in distant Hawaii and, however much of a surprise, could be understood as a traditional, if particularly shocking, act of war against military targets.
- The greatest impact of 9/11 was the destruction of the twin towers in the centre of New York City and the killing of nearly 3000 civilians.
- The 9/11 attacks were witnessed live on television by tens of millions of Americans, whereas Pearl Harbor had a less visceral impact, given the virtual non-existence of TV systems at that time. Television coverage gave 9/11 an immediacy that was particularly shocking, as so many Americans witnessed the collapse of the two towers as they happened, knowing that thousands of people were being killed.

In all of these respects, the impact of 9/11 was much greater than that of Pearl Harbor and, given the nature of the Bush administration, a war was inevitable even if it was to be against an enemy that was far more amorphous and dispersed than imperial Japan had been.

Although the Bush administration was confident in its determination to destroy the al-Qaeda movement, early progress in the war on terror, including the termination of the Taliban regime, was not matched by the subsequent developments. More than fifteen years after the 9/11 attacks, the United States remained mired in a protracted conflict in Afghanistan and the al-Qaeda movement was still active and seen in many countries as a persistent threat, in spite of the death of Osama Bin Laden. By the end of 2016 the ongoing conflicts in Iraq had cost the lives of over 169,000 civilians and left a deeply unstable and conflict-ridden country. From 2012 to 2016, a new extreme Islamist paramilitary movement had come to the fore, the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which claimed to have created a new 'caliphate' stretching across northern Syria and Iraq. A new US-led military coalition commenced an intense air war in mid-2014 which had killed 50,000 ISIS supporters by the end of 2016, but the ISIS movement was proving resilient and its suppression was a likely central element in the security posture of the incoming Trump administration in Washington. The 9/11 attacks and the robust American response have continued to raise questions over the nature of terrorism in the early twenty-first century and whether the approach of the Bush administration was effective or even appropriate.

This chapter begins by discussing definitions of terrorism and then examines the US experience of terrorism prior to 9/11 as well as the political environment in Washington at the time of the attacks. It then analyses the response of the Bush administration in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the nature and aims of the al-Qaeda organization. After making an assessment of the conduct of the war on terror in its first nine years, it concludes by discussing the options available to the United States in what came to be called the 'Long War against Islamofascism'.

Terrorism and the background to 9/11

Defining terrorism

A commonly used definition of terrorism is:

> "the threat of violence and the use of fear to coerce, persuade, and gain public attention."

(National Advisory Committee 1976)

A more widely used definition, and one that is regarded as being particularly helpful, is that of Wardlaw (1982):

> "Political terrorism is the use, or threat of use, of violence by an individual or group, whether acting for or in opposition to established authority, when such action is designed to create extreme anxiety and/or fear-inducing effects in a target group larger than the immediate victims with the purpose of coercing that group into acceding to the political demands of the perpetrators."

This definition is particularly helpful in several respects. Firstly, it specifically focuses on 'political terrorism' as distinct from criminal use of terror, as in the enforcement of protection rackets. Referring to political terrorism does not mean that such terrorists cannot be considered criminals. Indeed, many analysts argue that doing so reduces their significance as actors fighting for a political cause.

Secondly, this definition specifically refers to state terrorism as well as sub-state terrorism, a distinction that is largely lacking in most post-9/11 studies on terrorism where almost the entire emphasis is on sub-state terrorism. This is important because the overwhelming majority of the victims of terrorism, certainly in recent decades, have been the victims of terror instituted by their own governments. Such terror has involved the deaths and detention of many millions of people in almost all regions of the world. It includes major terror campaigns in Stalin's Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, and post-war China, and the actions of many governments across Africa, Latin America, and Asia. It also includes the use of terror by colonial powers in many late colonial conflicts. Almost all of this is lost in current terrorism studies, where the emphasis may extend to state sponsorship of sub-state groups, but rarely acknowledges the activities of states, including some democracies.

Finally, Wardlaw's definition is useful because it places emphasis on a key aspect of terrorism, the determination to cause fear in a wider community than those immediately targeted. This, too, applies to state terrorism, where detention without trial, torture, disappearances, and death squads have been employed and are still being employed in many countries. While the concern of this chapter is specifically with the American experience of sub-state terrorism, especially since the 9/11 attacks, it is necessary to remember this wider context, especially as there is a persistent tendency to apply the terms 'terror' and 'terrorist' in a pejorative sense, referring to legitimate political movements and individuals who cannot easily be described as terrorists.

The American experience before 9/11

Western European countries experienced paramilitary violence in the 1970s and 1980s from politically motivated groups, and there were sustained paramilitary actions in Northern Ireland from the Provisional IRA and loyalist groups, and in Spain from the Basque Separatists, ETA. Across the Middle East, prior to 9/11, there were numerous paramilitary groups, many of them associated with the Palestinian cause. Elsewhere in the world, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam in Sri Lanka used political violence repeatedly, although they would argue that it was in response to government violence against the Tamil community. Many other countries have experienced terrorist activity, although the great majority of those killed, injured, or traumatized have been victims of state terrorism rather than of the activities of sub-state actors.

Prior to 9/11, the American experience of terrorism was relatively small, at least in terms of the conventional understanding of the term. At a time of political unrest in Europe in the 1960s and early 1970s, there were small-scale equivalents in the United States, including the left-wing Weathermen and the Symbionese Liberation Army, the latter famous for the kidnapping of the heiress Patty Hearst in February 1974. In parallel with these were the right-wing Minutemen, and it was from the political right that the worst individual act of terrorism came with the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Government Building in Oklahoma City on 19 April 1995, killing 168 people and injuring more than 500 (Anderson and Sloan 2002). Although less serious than the Oklahoma bombing in terms of casualties, the first attack on the World Trade Center, on 26 February 1993, was potentially catastrophic. The intention was to collapse the tower over the Vista Hotel, which connected the two towers, and then into the South Tower, completely destroying all three buildings. In the attack, six people were killed and over a thousand were injured, although most of the injuries involved relatively minor instances of smoke inhalation. While some of those responsible had already left the country, a number of others were detained and later imprisoned for long terms.

The 1995 Oklahoma City and 1993 World Trade Center bombings are generally considered to be the main examples of terrorist action in the United States prior to 2001, although many people would argue strongly that there had been highly significant examples of systematic terrorism directed against minorities. These included many incidents involving First Nation (native American) groups during the mid- and late 1800s, some involving massacres on a considerable scale. The argument from a First Nation perspective was that these should be properly described as acts of terrorism as they were intended to use large-scale fear for direct political purposes. Similarly, the innumerable examples of beatings, torture, and lynching of Black Americans, especially in Southern states well into the mid-twentieth century, have been described as systematic terrorism—the deliberate use of violence to instil fear into a wider community, ensuring their compliance with their allotted and subservient position in society.

More problematic in terms of foreign relations and controversial with regard to perceptions of terrorism was the widespread support among Irish Americans for the activities of the Provisional IRA in Northern Ireland and Britain, especially in the 1970s and 1980s. Even more controversial has been the question of US government support for paramilitary groups and what has been described as state terrorism in Latin America (George 1991). The arguments revolve around direct or indirect support for anti-leftist paramilitary groups in countries such as Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala, as well as for autocratic regimes such as that of General Augusto Pinochet in Chile, the main period being the 1970s and 1980s. Frequent claims were made of the training of military and paramilitary personnel at sites such as the School of the Americas, with training including the use of torture and other forms of terror. The counter-argument was that support for such groups did not extend to terrorism and was, in any case, necessary in the context of the intense Cold War competition with the Soviet Union.

US foreign policy and the Bush administration

The election of George W. Bush to the White House resulted in an administration that developed its foreign and security policy in a particular direction. This was largely due to the influence of a group of neo-conservative opinion formers, backed by a wider circle of politicians and advisers from an assertive realist background. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War, the post–Cold War world was seen as a vindication of free market liberal democracy, and many in the Bush administration were convinced of the possibility of envisaging a New American Century for the twenty-first century. In such a global environment the United States would play a world-wide civilizing role, ensuring an era of peace and security for humankind.

One particular concern was that what was seen as an excessive involvement in multilateral initiatives and negotiations could limit freedom of action, to the detriment both of the United States and its role in ensuring the New American Century. As a consequence, a number of early moves by the Bush administration signalled a desire to avoid such limits. It was clear that a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty would not be ratified by the United States, there would be a withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, there were grave doubts about aspects of the planned International Criminal Court and proposals to control arms transfers between states, and the United States would be highly unlikely to support negotiations to prevent the weaponization of space. Of particular concern to a number of western European states was the decision of the Bush administration to withdraw from the Kyoto climate change protocols, but there was also concern that the administration might not back the complex negotiations under way in Geneva to strengthen the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

From the perspective of the Bush administration, however, all of these policy changes fitted in with the idea that the United States, as the sole superpower, had the right and duty to determine the world's future. Furthermore, it had a historic responsibility to promote its political and social ideals in a manner that was confidently expected to make the world a better place. By the late summer of 2001, the mood in Washington was one of ebullience as it appeared that the administration really could further the idea of a New American Century with little prospect of any serious opposition. It was in this mood that the United States was to respond to the 9/11 attacks, and it was perhaps inevitable that the response would be very robust, given the sudden perception of vulnerability at a time when the future had looked so bright.

KEY POINTS

- Terrorism is most commonly conducted by states against their own populations.
- Prior to the 9/11 attacks, the United States had relatively limited exposure to terrorism.
- Some US activities in support of Irish republican groups and of paramilitary groups in Latin America were controversial.
- As the sole superpower at the time, the United States political system was particularly shocked by the 9/11 attacks.

The war on terror I

9/11 and the start of the war

Prior to the 9/11 attacks, the United States had already experienced a number of paramilitary attacks on facilities in the Middle East and North Africa. These included the killing of a number of US soldiers in Riyadh in Saudi Arabia in the mid-1990s, and the much more substantial attack on the Khobar Towers accommodation block at the US Air Force's King Abdul Aziz Air Base at Dhahran in eastern Saudi Arabia on 25 June 1996. In that attack, nineteen US service personnel were killed and 500 people injured. The bombing was claimed to have been down to internal Saudi paramilitaries, possibly linked to the al-Qaeda movement, but some investigators pointed to a possible connection with Iran.

Even more costly than the Khobar Towers attack were the bombings of the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam on 7 August 1998. The Dar es Salaam attack killed ten Tanzanians, with one American employee wounded, but the Nairobi attack was far more devastating as it caused the collapse of an office building alongside the embassy. The huge blast killed twelve US citizens and wounded six more, but the cost in lives for Kenyans was even higher than the Oklahoma bombing a year earlier, with 279 Kenyans killed and around 5000 injured. Even so, neither the Khobar Towers nor the Embassy bombings were sufficient to prepare Americans for the impact of the 9/11 attacks.

The immediate response of the Bush administration to the 9/11 atrocities was to demand that the Taliban regime in Afghanistan cease harbouring the leadership of the al-Qaeda movement or risk the use of US military force to do so, implying the termination of the regime if it did not comply. In the wake of the attacks the United States had strong support from people and governments in western Europe, with the French newspaper *Le Monde* famously using the headline 'Nous sommes tous Américains' ('We Are All Americans') the day after the attack. Support in much of the rest of the world was far more muted. It ranged from a degree of satisfaction, especially among many people in the Arab world, that the United States was on the receiving end of a violent attack, to a much more nuanced concern that a resultant worldwide war on terror might be deeply counterproductive (see Box 18. 2).

BOX 18.2 9/11 AND THE MAJORITY WORLD

One of the most astute analysts of the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks from a perspective away from the North Atlantic community was the academic and activist Walden Bello, a former academic at the University of California and later a professor at the University of the Philippines and also director of the influential Focus on the Global South non-government organization in Bangkok. In a remarkably prescient analysis written barely two weeks after the 9/11 attacks, Bello pointed to the risk of an endless war if the United States concentrated almost exclusively on a military response. He was forthright in condemning the attacks themselves but counselled against a response that ignored the widespread view of the United States across much of the majority world, pointing to the massive use of force in Vietnam and the bitter mood of opposition to US policies in the Middle East, not least in terms of US support for Israel and for elitist and autocratic regimes in countries such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

According to Bello, a quite different response was required:

> The only response that will readily contribute to global security and peace is for Washington to address not the symptoms but the roots of terrorism. It is for the United States to re-examine and substantially change its policies in the Middle East and the Third World, supporting for a change arrangements that will not stand in the way of the achievement of equity, justice and genuine national sovereignty for currently marginalized people. Any other way leads to endless war.

(*Bello 2001*)

Some indication of the radically different responses to the 9/11 attacks is that such a view would be roundly condemned in most political circles in Washington, just as it struck a loud chord with many opinion formers in the world away from the countries of the North Atlantic community.

In the absence of the required response from the Taliban regime in Kabul, the United States then moved rapidly to destroy the regime and the al-Qaeda militias in Afghanistan. Although the al-Qaeda movement might have hoped for a full-scale US military occupation of Afghanistan, in order to lure the US into a protracted guerrilla war, a rather different route to regime termination was taken, involving three elements. The main one was the decision to rearm and resupply the Northern Alliance forces, at that time the losing parties in the Afghan civil war. Supplies came largely from former Soviet countries, although funded by the United States. Secondly, the United States used extensive air power, both to destroy specific targets of value to the Taliban and also to use area impact munitions to kill Taliban units when they could be caught in any sizeable concentrations. Finally, the United States made extensive use of Special Forces, partly for target acquisition but also for direct support of Northern Alliance forces. US conventional military units were deployed in due course, principally troops from the Marine Corps in the south east of the country, especially around Kandahar.

The Afghan War initially appeared to be a conspicuous success, with the Taliban regime terminated by the end of November 2001, little more than six weeks after the start of the war, but this was somewhat misleading. In many cases, most notably in Kabul, the Taliban militia simply melted away, with their armaments intact, to towns and villages in Afghanistan and western Pakistan. Very few of the al-Qaeda militia were killed or detained, with most of the training camps found to be deserted when US troops eventually entered them. There were some instances when US troops came under intensive attack, especially in the Tora Bora mountains, but for the most part both the Taliban and al-Qaeda militias simply dispersed.

Even so, many hundreds were detained and there was an immediate controversy over the Bush administration's decision to detain large numbers of suspected terrorists at a camp established at the Guantanamo Bay military base in Cuba. This was out of the area of the US judiciary but was not subject to the Cuban judiciary. As a result, the detainees were fully under the control of the Pentagon and were widely seen outside the United States as being illegally detained. This was strongly disputed by the administration in Washington and there was initially little opposition within the United States to the establishment of the Guantanamo detention centre.

The State of the Union and West Point speeches

The first six months of 2002 can be said to have marked the high point of the success of the war on terror and are particularly significant for the manner in which the early achievements in Afghanistan led on to a significant expansion of the war aims, an expansion that was expressed in two key addresses by President Bush, the 2002 State of the Union Address in January and the Graduation Address at the West Point Military Academy five months later. The State of the Union Address was delivered to both Houses of Congress in the manner of a victory speech, with numerous rounds of applause. While signalling the extent of the victory in Afghanistan it went much further in extending the concept of the war on terror well beyond retaliatory action against the al-Qaeda movement in two specific ways.

The first of these was to make it clear that the enemy in the war on terror was not just limited to the al-Qaeda movement but included other Islamic radical organizations such as Hezbollah, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad. President Bush cited US operations in Bosnia, Somalia, and the Philippines, and placed particular emphasis on the need to destroy training camps wherever they might be, 'in remote jungles and deserts, and … in the centres of large cities' (Bush 2002). He made it clear that it was essential for all legitimate states to control such movements and went on to emphasize that if some governments chose not to act, then the United States would do so.

The second extension announced in the address was even more significant. The global war on terror was to go well beyond the issue of sub-state terror groups to include a number of rogue states that were defined as working against US security interests, both by their support for terrorist organizations and by their determination to develop weapons of mass destruction. Using the key phrase 'axis of evil', President Bush expanded the war to include such states as Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, and made it clear that these states would not be allowed to threaten the United States. Either they would give up their activities in relation to terrorism and the pursuit of weapons of mass destruction or they would face regime termination.

This major extension of the war was generally popular in the United States in early 2002, and there was specific support for possible action against the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq. At the same time,

this approach gave rise to considerable unease in other countries that had otherwise been sympathetic to the American predicament after 9/11. This was reflected in the cautious response of some western European governments to the speech, but much more so in terms of adverse public opinion, even in countries such as Britain, where the prime minister, Tony Blair, was fulsome in his support for the Bush administration.

Four months after the State of the Union Address, President Bush's speech at the West Point Military Academy went even further, making it clear that the United States had the right to take pre-emptive action against an enemy that might be a future threat to US security. This clearly included military action against states, with key members of the 'axis of evil' such as Iraq and Iran being obvious candidates for enforced regime change if there were not internal transformations. In the intervening period between the two addresses there were many indications that the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq would be the first candidate for pre-emptive military action.

The Iraq War

In March 2003, following discussions and a relatively weak resolution at the United Nations, a coalition of states led by the United States began a military campaign to terminate the Saddam Hussein regime. Within three weeks this had been achieved and there was an expectation that Iraq would make a rapid transition to a stable pro-Western country, with the coalition forces welcomed as liberators. This proved to be a gross misreading of the situation on many counts. The first was that weapons of mass destruction were not found, despite this being the primary stated motive in going to war. Secondly, little evidence emerged of any relationship between the Saddam Hussein regime and the al-Qaeda movement. This was hardly surprising given that Iraq had had a largely secular regime under Saddam Hussein, a form of governance anathema to the al-Qaeda movement.

Regime termination was followed by widespread pubic disorder which proved very difficult to control. A Coalition Provisional Authority was established by the Pentagon with the intention of establishing a free market economy, but this failed almost from the start. Two further errors were the exclusion of Ba'ath Party members from employment and the summary dismissal of the Iraqi Army. These actions together threw several hundred thousand people onto the streets, many of whom joined the evolving insurgency.

That insurgency developed rapidly within four months of the start of the war, one of most notable examples being the bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad. The killing of Saddam Hussein's sons Uday and Qusay Hussein in July 2003 and the capture of Saddam Hussein himself five months later had no discernible effect on the insurgency, which continued to develop over the next three years. By early 2007, the United States military had had nearly 3500 people killed and over 25,000 injured, with many of those injured being maimed for life. Countering a largely urban insurgency maintained by determined paramilitary groups proved very difficult, and there was a marked tendency for US forces to use their immense firepower advantages, often resulting in considerable collateral damage and civilian casualties. The assault on the city of Fallujah in November 2004 was a notable example of this and had an effect well beyond Iraq (see Box 18.3). Although Iraqi civilian casualties were difficult to measure with any accuracy, at least 100,000 were killed in the first four years; at times in the fourth year of the war, the monthly civilian casualties in Iraq were as great as the entire loss of life in the 9/11 attacks.

BOX 18.3 CASE STUDY: FALLUJAH—WHOSE TERRORISM?

In November 2004, with the war in Iraq barely eighteen months old, the US Army and Marine Corps launched a combined assault on the city of Fallujah, west of Baghdad, believing it to be the epicentre of the insurgency that was proving so difficult to counter. To the Bush administration, the Fallujah assault was an entirely necessary part of countering the terrorism that lay at the heart of the insurgency. As a result, considerable access was given to TV channels to record the assault, from the American perspective, as it progressed. To Muslims across the Arab world, the assault on Fallujah, which killed thousands of people, was nothing less than terrorism, and was widely compared to the 9/11 attacks. There was therefore a complete discontinuity in how the events were seen, and exploring this throws some light on the vexed question of why the war on terror has lasted so long.

A year after the termination of the Saddam Hussein regime, the insurgency in Iraq was developing rapidly, with American forces already losing scores of soldiers and hundreds wounded every month. The city of Fallujah was in the heart of central Iraq and was very largely populated by Sunni Muslims, many of whom had supported the previous regime of Saddam Hussein and were bitterly opposed to what was widely seen as a US occupation of their city and country, not a liberation from an oppressive regime. In April 2004, Fallujah was not under the control of the US forces, but a major attempt was made to change that in the wake of a particularly violent incident. On 31 March, five US Marines were killed when their armoured personnel carrier was blown up and on the same day four American private security contractors were seized by insurgents and killed. Their bodies were then mutilated and burnt before being hung from the girders of a bridge in front of a large angry crowd.

The subsequent attempt by the US Marine Corps to gain control of the city was partly in reaction to this atrocity, but US military units frequently found themselves engaged in bitter fights in an enclosed urban environment. On one occasion, a group of Marines was ambushed in the city by insurgents, suffered injuries, took refuge in nearby buildings and were rescued by a heavily armed and armoured convoy only after many hours of fighting. While Marine Corps representatives spoke proudly of the Marines' code of leaving no one behind, tensions in the city were exacerbated by an intensive reprisal raid on the area of the fighting by US AC-130 gunships several hours later. This destroyed several city blocks.

Six months later the city was considered to be such a centre of insurgency that a much larger assault and occupation was thought likely to cause the insurgency irreversible damage. As a result, a large force of around 15,000 troops and Marines was assembled for an all-out assault on the city. Over a protracted operation lasting more than two weeks Fallujah was indeed brought under control. The full extent of Iraqi casualties remains unknown but appears to have been several thousand people killed. About half of the 39,000 houses in Fallujah were either destroyed or badly damaged during the conflict, as well as most of the schools and other public buildings.

What was particularly notable about Fallujah was the remarkably contrasting images of the conflict as seen on US and Middle Eastern television channels. In the United States there was copious coverage of the artillery, tanks, and other weapons used in the assault. Particularly graphic images were broadcast of tracer bullets arcing over the river and into the city. Other images showed mosques and other buildings being hit as US troops systematically moved through the densely packed streets. All of them demonstrated the power of the US military and they were generally well received by many Americans as proof of the progress of the war. Here was a clear example of US forces taking the war to the enemy and taking control of the heartland of the insurgency—a city in which atrocities had been carried out against Americans earlier in the year. Throughout the assault, the administration repeatedly described the insurgents as terrorists. For the United States, Fallujah was a major success in the war in Iraq, and since this was seen as part of the wider war on terror, then the Fallujah attack could be seen as a battle won in that difficult war.

Even as the images of US military success were being broadcast, regional stations such as Al Jazeera were showing graphic and uncensored images from within the city, with corpses and body parts strewn across the streets, and with women and children critically wounded and waiting in understaffed and under-equipped medical centres. The scene for Arab and Muslim audiences was almost the exact opposite of the view from Washington. Fallujah was known as 'the city of mosques' and the American attack was seen as a direct assault by 'crusader' forces on what was almost a holy city. Furthermore, both the US TV footage of the firepower directed into the city, and the regional coverage from within the city strongly reinforced this view. In particular, the US TV images of the heavy firepower being used to great effect may have gone down well in the United States but had the directly opposite effect in the Middle East. Whatever the value for the US of the taking of Fallujah by the US military, its propaganda value for the insurgents and, indeed, for the wider al-Qaeda movement was very much greater.

Moreover, Fallujah did not turn out to be in any sense a turning point for the United States in Iraq. In the months that followed, the city was garrisoned by US and Iraqi government troops and was subjected to very high levels of security. These included a cordon around the entire city, with all vehicles subject to search and all adult males searched with particular diligence. In spite of this, improvised explosive devices were being manufactured in the city and used against American forces within months of the original attack.

Across Iraq as a whole, the insurgency gathered pace in the following months. Indeed at the very time that the US forces were engaged in the assault on Fallujah, the insurgency moved north to the city of Mosul. Such was the intensity of the sudden outbreak of fighting that the United States had to move in 2400 troops to reinforce the units there. Not only did the November 2004 assault on Fallujah fail to stem the insurgency, it almost certainly increased antagonism to the United States in Iraq and beyond, a result directly counterproductive to the original aim of the operation. What remains most significant, though, is the opposing views of the same events. For many Americans it was a reassuring demonstration of military capabilities in a bitter war against uncompromising terrorists, but for millions of people across the region it was proof of the ruthlessness of a foreign invader.

The Iraq War was primarily against insurgents who were Iraqis, but there were also paramilitary elements drawn in from other states, with some of them connected to the al-Qaeda movement. Partly on this basis, the Bush administration persistently represented the Iraq War as an essential part of the overall war on terror, seeking to establish it within the United States as part of the justified response to the original 9/11 attacks. Even so, support for the war decreased markedly during 2006, leading to the loss of control of Congress by the Republican Party. Furthermore, even as this was happening, developments in Afghanistan and in the capabilities of the al-Qaeda movement were such that more general aspects of the war on terror were becoming pertinent to any assessment of its progress.

KEY POINTS

- The immediate US reaction after 9/11 was to terminate the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and disperse the al-Qaeda movement.
- The war on terror was extended in 2002 to include an 'axis of evil' of rogue states such as Iraq, Iran, and North Korea.
- The Saddam Hussein regime was terminated early in 2003.
- An insurgency developed rapidly, against the expectations of the Bush administration.

The war on terror II

Afghanistan

When the US-led coalition successfully terminated the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, the Bush administration was confident that the al-Qaeda network had been substantially disrupted and that Afghanistan would make a rapid transition to a stable pro-Western state, increasing US influence in Central Asia. At the time, however, some of the most experienced analysts, especially senior UN personnel, expressed the need for very substantial aid for Afghanistan, in addition to the immediate deployment of a peacekeeping force of around 30,000 troops to ensure stability. Given that the country had experienced decades of war, it was considered wholly unrealistic to think that it could achieve a peaceful transition without substantial external help. There was also a particular concern, largely ignored by the Bush administration, that the Taliban militias had disappeared from sight rather than being defeated, and that they and their al-Qaeda associates had substantial scope for redeveloping their capabilities given that the frontier districts of Pakistan, such as North and South Waziristan, were areas where there was little or no central Pakistani government control.

In spite of these warnings, the United States was already preoccupied with preparing for regime termination in Iraq, and European states were very slow in providing aid or security assistance for the country. As a result, Taliban and other militias began to regain influence and control, especially in the south and south-east of Afghanistan, so that within five years of regime termination a serious insurgency was developing. Insurgents were aided by a substantial increase in opium poppy cultivation, with record harvests being declared in 2006. Moreover, far more of the raw opium was now being refined into heroin and morphine within the country rather than exported in its raw form. This greatly increased the illicit finances coming into the country. During the period 2002–7, NATO's International Security Assistance Force was eventually increased to around 30,000 troops, together with many thousands more US combat troops not under NATO command. While much of northern and western Afghanistan made slow progress, large areas of the south and east of the country were mired in conflict between coalition forces and a resurgent Taliban.

The Taliban capabilities were greatly aided by the lack of Pakistani government control of frontier districts. With the Taliban and other militias drawing largely from ethnic Pashtuns, and with the Pashtun community stretching well into Pakistan, the result was that the border districts were secure areas in which paramilitary groups were relatively safe from attack, and could train recruits and move supplies into Afghanistan. Furthermore, although the al-Qaeda movement was substantially dispersed, it too could treat areas of western Pakistan as safe havens. Given a strong mood of anti-Americanism across much of Pakistani society, it was not initially feasible for US forces to extend the war against the Taliban or al-Qaeda elements to Pakistan, although by 2010 the extensive use of armed drones was doing just this, while proving highly unpopular in Pakistan.

By early 2011 US forces in Afghanistan exceeded 100,000, with a further 40,000 troops from other coalition states. The Obama administration saw the troop surge as a means of enabling an eventual withdrawal from Afghanistan following negotiations with Taliban and other armed opposition groups conducted from a position of strength. In the event, this approach failed and by 2015 it was clear that the Taliban remained in control of a significant part of southern and eastern Afghanistan, including the key opium-cultivation province of Helmand. By the end of 2016 the Obama administration was maintaining a force of over 9,000 troops in the country and there appeared little prospect of further withdrawals under the incoming Trump administration. Indeed, by mid-2017 the indications were that US forces in the country would expand, with the addition of some 4,000 troops.

The al-Qaeda movement

In the 1980s there was vigorous opposition to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, coming mainly from radical Islamic paramilitaries known as the Mujahidin. Aided by the Inter-Services Intelligence agency in Pakistan and strongly supported by the CIA, the Mujahidin were eventually successful and the Soviet armed forces withdrew in some disarray. The Afghan defeat was one of the reasons for the collapse of the Soviet system, although some Islamic radicals believed that it was almost entirely due to the resistance.

One significant member of the Mujahidin was a young Saudi of Yemeni extraction, Osama bin Laden. His main role was in logistics and he had considerable wealth inherited from his father, who had run the leading construction company in Saudi Arabia, although he also had support from the CIA. Osama bin Laden and others, especially the Egyptian intellectual Ayman Zawahiri, regarded the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan as a great achievement, but were subsequently rebuffed by the Saudi authorities when they offered their expertise to help safeguard the Kingdom of the Two Holy Places (Mecca and Medina) when the Saddam Hussein regime occupied Kuwait in 1990.

After the 1991 Iraq War, bin Laden and others were bitterly opposed to the continuing US military presence in Saudi Arabia, regarding it as an utter affront to Islam that such 'crusader' forces could be entrenched in the heart of the Islamic world. Their opposition resulted in bin Laden's exile to Sudan during the 1990s and later to Afghanistan, where the radical Taliban regime enabled him and his associates to develop training camps and build a radical paramilitary movement known as al-Qaeda ('the base'). While the al-Qaeda movement and its offshoots such as ISIS tend to be regarded as nihilistic terrorist organizations that cannot be considered in any way political entities, this is a basic misreading of a movement that is an unusual combination of fundamentalist religious belief with very clear-cut political aims that stretch from a few decades through to a century or more.

Al-Qaeda is therefore best seen as a revolutionary movement with a religious belief rather than a specific political ideology at its root. In the short term it seeks the expulsion of all 'crusader' (i.e. Western) forces from the Islamic world, commencing with Saudi Arabia, and the termination of what it sees as elitist, corrupt, unrepresentative, and pro-Western regimes in countries across the Islamic world, especially Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The movement also supports some separatist groups such as those in southern Thailand and Islamic radicals in Kashmir and Chechnya. It is bitterly anti-Zionist and supports the Palestinian cause, even though most Palestinians do not want to be associated with the movement. All of these aims are regarded as achievable over a timescale measured in several decades, with the removal of uniformed US military forces in Saudi Arabia already having been achieved. In the long term, the movement seeks to establish a radical Islamist caliphate, centred on the Middle East, but this is an aim that may take 50 to 100 years.

Al-Qaeda has therefore worked on an entirely different timescale to that of Western political systems. The latter may look four to five years ahead whereas al-Qaida measures its progress in decades. Secondly, and related to this, the al-Qaida leadership did not envisage its long-term aims being achieved in its lifetime. The movement therefore had an eschatological dimension quite different from most revolutionary movements of the last three centuries, in which revolutionaries depended on support generated substantially through the prospect of short-term success.

A further feature of the movement concerns its dispersal after the 9/11 attacks and the remarkable manner in which this was combined with a maintenance of support. Regime termination in Afghanistan and the killing or detention of significant elements of the leadership might have been expected to have

hugely weakened the movement but this did not proved to be the case. It metamorphosed into a very loose connection of groups, with some modest degree of centralization, primarily in western Pakistan. It was hugely aided by the coverage of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, especially the reporting of large numbers of civilian casualties on satellite TV news channels such as Al Jazeera (see Box 18.4). Such reporting combined with overtly propagandistic videos, DVDs, and internet communications to produce a sense of Islam under attack that powerfully aided support for the movement.

BOX 18.4 TELEVISION AND TERRORISM

One of the reasons for the very robust response of the Bush administration to the 9/11 attacks was that there was tremendous support from across the United States, partly because of the manner in which the atrocity had been witnessed live on television by many tens of millions of Americans (see Box 18.1). In the months that followed, television footage of the war in Afghanistan on US TV networks showed little of the civilian casualties of the war, but this was not the case for audiences across the Middle East and the majority world. In Afghanistan and even more so in Iraq, a new generation of twenty-four-hour satellite TV news channels was covering the wars not from an American perspective but from the position of civilians who were on the receiving end of US firepower. Two of the most significant channels were Al-Arabiya, based in Dubai, and, even more so, Al Jazeera, based in Qatar.

Al Jazeera, in particular, developed a reputation for technical competence and professionalism, but took a much more robust approach to broadcasting images of casualties, showing dead and injured people in a far more graphic manner than was common among Western networks. A few months into the Iraq War, Al Jazeera was getting audiences for its prime-time bulletins of some tens of millions of people across the Middle East. Moreover, it acquired a reputation for authenticity because it also screened debates about major Arab themes, some of them covering thorny questions such as corruption, with implied criticisms of some of the elites controlling countries such as Egypt and Jordan. This later proved particularly significant in relation to its coverage of political change in Tunisia and Egypt in early 2011, with Al Jazeera English extending the organization's reach to new constituencies across the world.

Finally, the greatest single advantage to the al-Qaeda movement was the seven-year US-led war in Iraq. This benefited the movement in two quite different ways. The first was that the war could be readily represented as a 'crusader' occupation of a key Arab/Islamic state and, as such, an affront to Islam as a whole. This may be seen as the direct opposite to a view still common in the United States that the Iraq War was a war of liberation of the Iraqi people from a dangerous and brutal dictatorship. The second benefit was that the war allowed Iraq to become what might be described as a jihadist combat training zone, steadily producing an accumulation of young paramilitaries who travelled to Iraq from across the Middle East and North Africa, and gained combat experience in the cities and towns of central Iraq.

The proportion of foreign paramilitaries in Iraq may have been small, perhaps barely a tenth of the insurgents, but as they moved in and through Iraq they made up a growing cohort. Moreover, their experience was more significant than that of an earlier generation of paramilitaries in Afghanistan in the 1980s. Those in Afghanistan had been opposing a Soviet occupation primarily by young conscripts in a largely rural environment. By contrast, jihadist paramilitaries in Iraq gained combat experience against professional and exceptionally well-equipped US forces in a largely urban environment. Given that the wider al-Qaeda movement is concerned with terminating regimes across the Middle East over a period of several decades, such an evolving cohort of paramilitaries may well turn out to be one of the most disturbing products of the Iraq War.

Al-Qaeda: decline and transformation after 2010

Two decades after it first evolved, and a decade after the 9/11 attacks, the al-Qaeda movement was still developing and was attracting substantial support from across the Middle East and beyond. In terms of its direct capabilities and leaving aside the substantial involvements in Afghanistan and Iraq, by late 2010 the movement could be said to have been far more active in the nine years following the 9/11 attacks than in a similar period before. This alone is enough to suggest

that the conduct of the US-led war on terror had not achieved its anticipated aims.

Over the period 2002–10, the al-Qaeda movement or its loose affiliates carried out attacks in many countries. They included major incidents in London, Madrid, and Bali, and many other attacks against Western or Israeli targets, or against local elites. Examples included a number of attacks on US interests in Pakistan, two double bombings against Jewish and British targets in Istanbul, the bombing of the Marriott Hotel and the Australian Embassy in Djakarta, a synagogue in Tunisia, and four Western-orientated targets in Casablanca. Israeli interests were attacked at the Paradise Hotel in Kikambala, Kenya, the attempt to shoot down an Israeli tourist jet, also in Kenya, and the bombing of the Taba Hilton and a campsite in Sinai, which were both popular with Israeli tourists. In addition to other attacks in Sinai, there was an attempt to damage an American warship in Aqaba Harbour in Jordan, the bombing of three Western hotels in the Jordanian capital of Amman, and several attacks in Saudi Arabia, including an attempt to disrupt oil exports by bombing the Abqaiq oil processing plant. Many other planned attacks in London, Paris, Rome, Singapore, and elsewhere were disrupted, but the overall situation, nine years after 9/11, showed a movement that was not in retreat and a United States military predicament in Afghanistan that did not lend itself to easy solutions unless there were major changes in policy.

While al-Qaida remained a potent if dispersed movement at the end of 2010, the killing of Osama bin Laden in May 2011 and the diminishing of the leadership in north-west Pakistan through armed drone and Special Force operations both pointed to a movement in decline. Even more significant might be the potential political transformation across the Arab Middle East that began in early 2011, especially the collapse of autocratic regimes in Tunisia and Egypt and their potential replacement with more representative governance. If social and economic conditions were to improve consequent on these changes, then the potential for extreme Islamist revolutionary movements might diminish. If, on the other hand, the Arab Spring were to fail to evolve and there were substantial repression and rigidity, the al-Qaida movement would then have a remarkable opportunity to provide an enduring focus for dissent.

In the event, the period from 2011 to 2016 involved rapid changes, focused principally in Iraq, Syria, and Libya. President Obama withdrew all US combat troops from Iraq by the end of 2011, but by then the remnants of the al-Qaeda presence in the country—al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)—was already reforming and was greatly aided by a series of successful prison breaks in 2012 and 2013 that released thousands of highly experienced paramilitaries. At the same time, non-violent opposition to the Assad regime in Syria was met with excessive force which in turn resulted in the rapid evolution of an armed insurgency with a strong Islamist element.

This element, in turn, linked with AQI to form a new movement centred on the northern Syrian city of Raqqa but with influence stretching right across northern Iraq and with a strong technocratic base bolstered by former Ba'ath Party members from the Saddam Hussein era. By early 2014 many towns and cities across northern Iraq were coming under control of this movement, which split from al-Qaeda and announced the creation of a new caliphate after Iraq's second city of Mosul fell to what became known variously as ISIS, ISIL, Islamic State, or Daesh.

Four further elements should be noted. One is that while ISIS had a similar eschatological dimension to al-Qaeda, it was far more concerned with creating a territorial caliphate than terminating existing regimes and was also less concerned with striking the 'far enemy' of Western states. The second is that while it broke from al-Qaeda, that movement retained a presence in Syria through al-Nusra Front. Finally, in many other countries, Islamist movements continued to evolve, including in Nigeria, Mali, Niger, Somalia, and Yemen.

The remarkable and rapid success of ISIS in Iraq by mid-2014 resulted in the Obama administration forming a coalition of Western and Middle Eastern countries to support the Iraqi government in countering ISIS. Avoiding the placing of large numbers of troops on the ground, the new war focused on air assault using strike aircraft and armed drones, primarily in Iraq but increasingly in Syria. This coincided with some Western and Gulf support for the more secular groups opposing the Assad regime in Damascus, but Russian support for the regime altered the balance of power in that civil war and led to the fall of Aleppo to government forces late in 2016. One consequence of the Russian intervention and the subsequent success of the Assad regime against rebel forces was that the affiliate of al-Qaeda in Syria, al-Nusra Front, rebranded itself as the more independent Jabha Fareh al-Sham (JFS) and attracted support from some

of the previously more secular militias, focusing its influence mainly in Idlib Province in the north-west, while ISIS was still centred on Raqqa to the east.

The US-led air war on ISIS retained an intensity that went largely unreported in the Western media after 2014 but by the end of 2016 had involved some 17,000 air raids on over 30,000 targets using 60,000 missiles and bombs, most of them precision-guided. The death toll of ISIS paramilitaries and supporters over this period was of the order of 50,000, and this undoubtedly weakened the movement and aided the Iraqi government in retaking several cities including Fallujah and Ramadi, culminating in an assault on Mosul.

One consequence of this new war was that ISIS began to operate beyond the region, much as al-Qaeda had done a decade earlier. This included more sustained attempts to organize in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and the Sahel, although US military aid to Libyan government militias limited its influence there. More significantly for Western countries was the development of a campaign of action that included attacks in Brussels, Paris, London, Manchester, Nice, and Berlin. This both demonstrated the continuing influence and capabilities of the movement and increased anti-Islamic attitudes across the Western world.

During the US presidential election of 2016, the candidate Donald Trump argued that the increased use of military force against ISIS was essential and that the United States must increase its military budget. This suggested that a long-term war was in prospect, given that ISIS, al-Qaeda, and their various affiliates saw themselves as guardians of their variants of Islam under attack from 'crusader forces and their Zionist allies' and therefore might welcome such a posture. By mid-2017, ISIS had lost most of its territory in Iraq and a substantial part of its territory in Syria. It was, though, expanding its links in Afghanistan and Egypt and was also increasingly a model for extreme Islamist movements in the Philippines.

Conclusion: rethinking the war on terror

In the first sixteen years of the war on terror the United States and its coalition partners terminated regimes in Afghanistan, Libya, and Iraq, took action in Yemen, Pakistan, and Somalia and engaged with intelligence and security agencies across the world. While the United States did not experience another major paramilitary attack on its own territory, there were several attempts which were prevented including intended bombings in Los Angeles and New York and the hijacking of aircraft. At the same time, the al-Qaida movement and ISIS engaged in many actions against Western interests, including attacks on US facilities such as diplomatic missions and US-owned hotels.

During this period well over 100,000 people were detained without trial for varying periods, with some detained for well over a decade, not least at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. At any one time for much of that period, around 20,000 people were in detention, mainly in Iraq and Afghanistan. At least 200,000 civilians were killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, probably many more. A confrontation with Iran appeared increasingly possible, especially after the election of Donald Trump in November 2016. Across the Middle East and much of the majority world, there was a measurable increase in anti-American attitudes and the coalition of states supporting the United States in Iraq was reduced to a handful. US military casualties were high, with close to 4000 killed and well over 30,000 injured. Because of improvements in body armour and battlefield medicine, many of the injured who might otherwise have died survived with grievous wounds, frequently likely to have lifetime effects.

While US troop numbers decreased markedly in Iraq in 2009–10, the country remained mired in insecurity, with at least 4000 civilians killed in each year,

KEY POINTS

- Afghanistan did not make the transition to a peaceful society and the Taliban re-emerged.
- The al-Qaeda movement was more active in the six years following 9/11 than before.
- The al-Qaeda movement operates on a timescale measured in decades.
- Iraq became a useful combat training zone for Islamist paramilitaries, from which arose ISIS.
- By 2017 the United States was leading a major war in Iraq and Syria against ISIS.

and descended into greater violence with the rapid growth of ISIS after 2014. Meanwhile, in Afghanistan prospects for a transition to a more peaceful polity seemed remote, indicating the need for a fundamental reassessment of security policy. Even so, long-term changes in the conduct of the war on terror are constrained by two factors. One is that the al-Qaida movement and its offshoots are working on a very long timescale, certainly measured in decades rather than years. The other is that while US domestic politics may be subject to short-term change, the enduring significance of the Persian Gulf for the security of oil supplies means that any total US withdrawal from the region as a whole would be seen by many as a foreign and security policy disaster at least as great as the defeat in the Vietnam War (see Box 18.5).

BOX 18.5 TERRORISM AND OIL SECURITY

The war on terror has been substantially complicated by the strategic importance of the Persian Gulf region as the location of around half of the world's remaining proved oil reserves. While the argument that the United States occupied Iraq in 2003 is at best tenuous and at worst no more than a conspiracy theory, there certainly has been a long-term US concern with Persian Gulf security, not least with the establishment of the Joint Rapid Deployment Task Force in 1979 and its expansion into US Central Command five years later. From a US perspective, ensuring Persian Gulf security is a necessary part of the US defence posture for two reasons. One is the sheer concentration of reserves (see Table 18.1), with some 46 per cent of world oil reserves located in six countries in the Gulf region—Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. A further 24 per cent is in Russia and Venezuela, but much of the latter's is low grade. The other is the increasing dependence of both the United States and China on imported oil as they run down their domestic reserves. Fracking is helping the US boost production, but that may be helpful only in the short term and carries considerable environmental consequences. In the longer term the developing impact of climate disruption will inevitably cause a global rethink on fossil fuel use.

Table 18.1 World oil reserves 2010

	Billion barrels	Percentage of world total
Venezuela*	300.9	17.7
Saudi Arabia	266.6	15.7
Canada*	172.2	10.1
Iran	157.8	9.3
Iraq	143.1	8.4
Russia	102.4	6.0
Kuwait	101.5	6.0
United Arab Emirates	97.8	5.8
United States	55.0	3.2
Libya	48.4	2.8
Kazakhstan	39.8	3.0
Nigeria	37.1	2.2
Qatar	25.7	1.5
China	18.5	1.1

Source: BP Statistical Review of World Energy, June 2016.
*Note that Canada has large reserves of low grade tar sands and the Venezuela total includes substantial heavy oil deposits—both are difficult and expensive to extract, thus increasing the relative importance of Persian Gulf oil reserves.

On the other hand, the al-Qaida movement, ISIS, and like-minded groups could lose support if there were major changes in US and coalition policies. These would include great caution in the use of military force, successful support for an enduring and just settlement of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, support for political and social emancipation in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan, and some other Islamic states, and a policy of counter-terrorism rooted primarily in policing and criminal investigation rather than vigorous pursuit of military solutions.

While the Obama administration decreased the US military involvement in Iraq and advocated political change in the region, there is little prospect of an Israeli/Palestinian settlement or of an early withdrawal from Afghanistan, and those significant policy changes that did follow President Obama's election in 2008 may not be sustained by the Trump administration. There thus remains the real prospect of a prolonged conflict measured in decades rather than years.

QUESTIONS

1. What were the main examples of terrorism in the United States before the 9/11 attacks?
2. Why did the Bush administration extend the war on terror to include an 'axis of evil'?
3. What are the aims of the al-Qaeda movement?
4. Why was the termination of the Saddam Hussein regime and the subsequent occupation of Iraq of value to the al-Qaeda movement?
5. What were the different perceptions of the US attack on Fallujah in November 2004?
6. Why is the strategic significance of the Persian Gulf oil reserves relevant to the conduct of the war on terror?

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19

Religion

Lee Marsden

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Introduction

It is perhaps no coincidence that the influence of religion on US foreign policy is making its first appearance in this, the third edition of this key textbook on US foreign policy. Religion has been largely unacknowledged as a factor in international relations until comparatively recently. This is particularly surprising when considering US foreign policy, representing a country which has been unapologetically religious from the arrival of Puritan settlers in the seventeenth century to the present day when religious actors have a profound influence on the outcome of elections, whether it is white conservative evangelical support for Republican candidates or African American and Jewish support for Democrats. This chapter does not claim that religion is the decisive factor in US foreign policy, but it does argue that understanding the role of religion is necessary for developing our understanding of US foreign policy, and a failure to do so presents an incomplete picture.

Religion is indelibly part of American culture and identity. John Winthrop's vison of a 'city upon a hill', serving as an example to other nations of obedience to God and a demonstration of his blessing, undergirds America's sense of itself as a chosen nation. America's white protestant heritage has been able to incorporate other faiths over successive generations to contribute to a shared identity based on foundational myths of manifest destiny, exceptionalism, being an 'innocent' nation pursuing right intentions and yet constantly maligned and misunderstood, and a civil religion which conflates the will of God and US national interests (Marsden 2012).

The US's founding fathers in 1776 declared that all men were 'endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights' and that an independent America would maintain 'a firm reliance on Divine Providence'. The first amendment to the Constitution separated religion and state, ostensibly to protect religion from the power of the state and to prevent an established church from dominating American society as it had in Britain. This enabled Christianity, and later other faiths, to develop unfettered by state control and to remain a vital component of American society. The separation of church and state sought to differentiate between the private and public sphere and to limit the role of religion in influencing policy and the role of the state in influencing religion. Yet religion has shaped the experience of individuals and communities throughout American history.

American notions of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are religious constructs. When combined with exceptionalism, these constructs lead to the desire to propagate values—values that successive US administrations have held to be universal. In these values lay the roots of free markets, democracy and human rights promotion, humanitarian intervention, and religious freedom. The classical realism of the US's mid-twentieth-century international relations was informed by views of human nature, deriving from the nation's Judeo-Christian heritage. The constructivist turn in international relations, which gives voice to ideational, identity, and cultural norms as influences on foreign policy, necessitates that we acknowledge the potential for religious faith to play such a role. This is especially pertinent in a culture where biennial elections afford citizens a regular voice in the political process.

The capacity of individual agents including presidents, secretaries of state, academics, and public intellectuals to shape US foreign policy may be limited by structural constraints, and yet who would seek to deny that the faith of Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, Jimmy Carter, or George W. Bush had a profound impact on their presidencies? Even where the president's own faith might be minimal or non-existent they are still subject to the entreaties of religious leaders who minister to a significant proportion of the American population. Clearly religious actors do not all speak with one voice on the same issues, and at certain periods influence will be greater than others. What this chapter seeks to achieve is to alert you, the reader, to the role religion has played and continues to play in US foreign policy despite its omission in so much of international relations theory and US foreign policy literature.

Religion and US foreign policy during the Cold War

The United States emerged from the Second World War as the preeminent world power and set about building a world order based on the principles of collective security, decolonization, and open markets through the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions. These were in part inspired by the Federal Council of Churches, which consisted of mainline liberal Protestant denominations and was intimately involved in post-war planning, establishing a Commission on a Just and Durable Peace in December 1940. The commission produced the 'Six Pillars of Peace' document in 1943, stating what it considered to be the essential components of a pacific world order. These included the need for an overarching international organization (the United Nations), economic justice, reform of the world system, decolonization, disarmament, and the protection of individual freedoms of religion and intellectual liberty.

Truman

Ideological rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States turned into geopolitical competition from the earliest stages of the post-war period. Religious actors in the United States across the faith spectrum had little doubt that the two systems were incompatible. For President Harry Truman, the main factor differentiating Soviet communism from American liberalism was religion, from which individual liberty, conscience, and democracy flow. This view was reinforced by Christian realists Reinhold Niebuhr and George Kennan (see Key quotes 19.1), the latter arguing that the Soviet Union represented a rival ideology, was not amenable to peaceful coexistence, and should be contained (Kennan 1946, 1947). Truman in turn reinforced this message, arguing that the success of containment was dependent upon a moral offensive, which could only be supplied by religion (Truman 1950). This approach assumed greater significance as communist military strength and political influence grew in the aftermath of the

war. The successful Soviet atomic bomb test and Mao Zedong's victory in China in 1949 were viewed in America, at least, through the prism of a dualistic world order. This was a narrative that evangelist Billy Graham, who was to become a confidant of successive presidents from Truman to George W. Bush, used effectively in religious crusades across America and the rest of the world (Graham 1952, no date; Frost 2014).

Eisenhower

Graham's anti-communism fitted well with the Republican administration of Dwight D. Eisenhower and growing anti-Soviet sentiment. Eisenhower was overt in his use of religious imagery and references to faith to unite the nation, an approach that corresponded with a significant national increase in religiosity across the decade. Eisenhower introduced prayer in the inaugural address and before cabinet meetings, attended the National Prayer Breakfast, and introduced 'Under God' to the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and 'In God We Trust' to currency and as the nation's motto. In his first inaugural address he contrasted American faith to communism: 'Freedom is pitted against slavery; lightness against the dark. The faith we hold belongs not to us alone but to the free of all the world' (Eisenhower 1953). Eisenhower was ably supported in his task by another committed Christian, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles.

Dulles saw no division between his religious belief and US national interests and entered office determined to pursue policies designed to promote free enterprise, democracy, and religious faith in a pacific world order which could only be assured by continuing policies of containment and constant vigilance. His family background of Presbyterian Calvinism gave him a missionary zeal and a belief in absolute good and absolute evil (Kinzer 2014). The outworking of Dulles and Eisenhower's dualism viewed international affairs

KEY QUOTES 19.1: RELIGION AND US FOREIGN POLICY IN THE COLD WAR

Billy Graham's revival speech on the steps of the Capitol Building, Washington, DC, 3 February 1952

All over the world today the spectre of communism is not only an appalling reality but communism today is sweeping from one end of the world to the other and infiltrating every nation of the world. I believe, today, that the battle is between communism and Christianity and, I believe, the only way that we are going to win that battle is for America to turn back to God, back to Christ, and back to the Bible at this hour.

(*Graham 1952*)

Reinhold Niebuhr in 1952

We take, and must continue to take, morally hazardous actions to preserve our civilization. We must exercise our power. But we ought neither to believe that a nation is capable of perfect disinterestedness in its exercise, nor become complacent about particular degrees of interest and passion which corrupt the justice by which the exercise of power is legitimized.

(*Niebuhr 2008: 8*)

President Dwight D. Eisenhower's statement on signing the bill to incorporate 'Under God' in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, June 1954

From this day forward, the millions of our school children will daily proclaim in every city and town, every village and rural school house, the dedication of our nation and our people to the Almighty. To anyone who truly loves America, nothing could be more inspiring than to contemplate this rededication of our youth, on each school morning, to our country's true meaning. … In this way we are reaffirming the transcendence of religious faith in America's heritage and future; in this way we shall constantly strengthen those spiritual weapons which forever will be our country's most powerful resource, in peace or in war.

(*Eisenhower 1954*)

President Ronald Reagan's 'evil empire' speech to the National Association of Evangelicals, Orlando, Florida, March 1983

Yes, let us pray for the salvation of all of those who live in that totalitarian darkness—pray they will discover the joy of knowing God. But until they do, let us be aware that while they preach the supremacy of the state, declare its omnipotence over individual man, and predict its eventual domination of all peoples on the Earth, they are the focus of evil in the modern world …

While America's military strength is important, let me add here that I've always maintained that the struggle now going on for the world will never be decided by bombs or rockets, by armies or military might. The real crisis we face today is a spiritual one; at root, it is a test of moral will and faith.

(*Reagan 1983*)

through an ideological paradigm, where popular discontent was interpreted as communist expansionism which was to be resisted.

The US was involved in the overthrow of democratic governments in Guatemala and Iran; US troops became embroiled in Vietnam; and neutrality in the competition between the Soviet Union and United States was regarded as immoral and being pro-Moscow. Religious conservatives, who were replacing mainline Protestants as the dominant religious actors, supported such policies and coalesced around Dulles's anti-communism and American nationalism. Liberals, including the National Council of Churches, challenged the administration on its hypocrisy of castigating the immorality of communism while presiding over racial injustice and gross inequality at home. They urged dialogue with the Soviet Union, nuclear disarmament, human rights, support for international economic development, and for the People's Republic of China to replace Taiwan in the UN Security Council.

Kennedy and Johnson

The 1960 presidential election saw a narrow victory by John F. Kennedy, the first Catholic president. Catholicism at this time was regarded with deep suspicion by both the liberal and conservative protestant majority. Attempts by Truman and Eisenhower to enlist the support of the Vatican in an anti-communist crusade were met with suspicion by American protestant leaders, some of whom viewed Catholicism as another form of totalitarianism. In order to assuage this hostility, Kennedy pledged that his faith was a private matter and that he would not be subject to instruction or influence from the Pope (Kennedy 1960). The overt religiosity of the three preceding presidents was replaced by an increasingly secular approach to governance and foreign policy.

The 1960s marked a significant shift in established norms and traditions within society across much of the world and America in particular. US anti-communism was challenged by a new generation which emphasized civil rights, love, peace, racial tolerance, and social justice over religiosity. Liberal theologians challenged the deity of Christ and increasingly emphasized a social gospel based on world peace and social justice, which they argued began at home and extended to US foreign policy. A new relativism, openness to eastern religion, non-violent resistance, existentialism, and liberation theology ensued. The Immigration and Nationality Act 1965 opened up a wave of immigration and further weakened white Anglo-Saxon Protestant dominance.

The Vietnam War divided the country and increasingly became the main focus of discontent between liberal and conservative Christian and Jewish leaders. Those who had been active in the civil rights and disarmament campaigns of the 1950s and early 1960s now coalesced around opposition to the war. Kennan and Niebuhr opposed the war on the basis of just war theory and the principle that the war was inimical to US interests. Martin Luther King led Christian opposition to the war through his co-chairmanship of Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam, lamenting that 'the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today' was 'my own government' (King 1967). Christian peace activists Norman Morrison and Roger Allen La Porte self-immolated in protest against the war, making a lasting impression on Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, who witnessed the first of these incidents.

Religious opposition to the Vietnam War was by no means universal, however, with many Catholics supporting their co-religionist Ngo Dinh Diem's government against the Viet Cong. Conservative evangelicals in the American Council of Christian Churches and in the churches tended to support the war. Billy Graham, a personal friend and confidant of Kennedy's successor, President Lyndon B. Johnson, supported the war and urged support for the president in resisting the communist tide. Culture wars increasingly divided religious communities with conservative evangelicals, fundamentalists, and Catholics increasingly uncomfortable with an ever more liberal society.

Nixon, Ford, and Carter

In reaction to the cultural reformation of the 1960s, white evangelicals, fundamentalists, and Catholics became increasingly conservative and Republican as the Democratic Party grew more secular. Mainline Protestant churches experienced declining membership and influence as conservative evangelicals started to grow in numbers in response and opposition to the cultural changes sweeping America. The increased separation of church and state enforced by the Supreme Court through the decision to legalize abortion in 1973 sent a clear message that the US was a secular state. The influence of the women's liberation

movement, the adoption of a secular social gospel by mainline denominations, and opposition to US foreign policy all contributed to strengthening countervailing forces of evangelicalism and socially conservative Catholicism.

This pushback extended opposition beyond domestic reforms in society to the international arena. At home, conservative evangelicals and Catholics opposed federal government interference in church and in state government. In the international arena they added their support for policies which put American interests first: maintaining a strong military, pursuing unilateralist policies, and opposing any attempts to constrain US interests by international organizations including the United Nations. Billy Graham maintained a close friendship with Richard Nixon, although there is little evidence to suggest that Nixon's foreign policy owed anything to the relationship. Indeed, Henry Kissinger's policy of détente under the Nixon administration smacked of an accommodation with atheistic communism. Religious freedom was an important issue for both religious liberals and conservatives, and through the Jackson-Vanik amendment in 1972 Nixon was prevented from offering most favoured nation status to the Soviet Union, or any other country, if they did not have an open emigration policy. The amendment was specifically targeted at the Soviet Union's reluctance to allow Soviet Jews to migrate to Israel.

Defeat in Vietnam, Watergate, the ineffectual Ford presidency, and an increasingly liberal society prepared the ground for a religious right to emerge and play an active role in seeking to impact domestic and international politics. Jimmy Carter, a born-again Christian, was seen as the antidote to Nixon's moral frailty, and evangelicals held out great expectations that his presidency would roll back on core issues such as abortion and the separation of church and state. Carter's faith impacted his policy in advocating for human rights, but his unwillingness to advance evangelical causes and perceived weakness in foreign policy, at a time of the Iranian revolution and seizure of the US embassy in Tehran in 1979, alienated many evangelicals.

Reagan and George H. W. Bush

The increasing popularity of conservative religion and subsequent decline of mainstream denominations throughout the 1970s led to the formation of numerous socially conservative religious organizations. These included Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum (1972), dedicated to traditional family values and a strong US foreign policy; James Dobson's Focus on the Family (1977) and Family Research Council (1981); and Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority, the Religious Roundtable, Christian Voice, and Concerned Women for America (1979). This new wave of organizations brought together right-wing evangelicals and Catholics in a Christian right, which found a new champion in California governor Ronald Reagan.

Reagan, although not evangelical, was sufficiently religious and politically astute to win the friendship of Graham and the support of conservative evangelicals, who were rapidly emerging as a significant force in domestic politics, for his presidential campaign. Before the election Reagan announced to a meeting of evangelical leaders in Dallas that although they could not endorse him, he was happy to endorse them. The Moral Majority, which comprised white evangelicals, fundamentalists, and white Catholics coalesced around opposition to abortion and gay rights, and support for school prayer, traditional family values, small government, a strong military, and Israel. Reagan seemed the surer bet in reversing Roe vs. Wade (the statute legalizing abortion) and countering communism and other threats facing the United States. For evangelicals, being courted by a contender for the presidency proved irresistible.

Reagan did open the doors of the White House to conservative evangelicals and instituted normal diplomatic relations with the Vatican. Although there were little gains for the religious right domestically, on foreign policy Reagan reintroduced a focus on civil religion. The conflict with the Soviet Union and communism was framed as religious conflict, a struggle between the forces of good and evil. The depiction of the Soviet Union as an 'evil empire' was given in an address to the National Association of Evangelicals in 1983, and reflected evangelical thoughts which viewed the Cold War through both a moral and an ideological prism. The Christian right supported the policy of increased arms expenditure, including nuclear proliferation, and the opposing of communist advances anywhere in the world, especially in Latin America.

For religious liberals in the mainstream denominations, civil religion was no longer a unifying force but further divided religious actors. Religious liberals opposed US support of right-wing dictatorships and

death squads in Latin America. Catholic bishops and those churches with a peace testimony, including the Quakers, opposed the nuclear weapons programme. For conservative evangelicals, however, Reagan represented the restoration of American pride and prestige after defeat in Vietnam and the debacle of the Iranian embassy siege.

While Reagan was fêted, his vice-president, Episcopalian George H. W. Bush, did not fare so well. Reagan could make common cause with conservative evangelicals, but Bush remained somewhat aloof and awkward in their company. Although Jerry Falwell backed Bush in his 1988 presidential campaign, Bush was opposed in the primaries by televangelist Pat Robertson. Although Bush won the nomination and presidency, he did so with reduced evangelical support by comparison with Reagan. Bush's campaign also marked a significant change in the strategy of the Christian Right. The outcome of Robertson's challenge was to persuade religious conservatives that rather than seek bipartisan influence they could achieve their aims more successfully by dominating the Republican Party.

In 1989 Robertson founded the Christian Coalition and began a process of taking over local Republican parties, so that today the Christian right makes up about 40 per cent of the Republican base, ensuring that they are able to influence the outcome of presidential, congressional, and gubernatorial nominations. Bush lost the 1992 election, despite presiding over the end of the Cold War and decisive victory in the Gulf War, through a failure to reach the same levels of Christian right support enjoyed by Reagan.

KEY POINTS

- American identity is built on foundational myths of manifest destiny, exceptionalism, 'innocent' nation, and civil religion.
- Presidents Eisenhower and Reagan viewed the Cold War through a religious paradigm contrasting atheistic communism with liberty and religious belief.
- Religious actors were deeply divided over the Vietnam War, with liberals leading the anti-war movement and conservatives more supportive of US policy.
- The emergence of the Christian right led to greater input by religious conservatives in the Republican Party and advocacy of a strong defence of US national interests.

Support for Israel

The US–Israel bilateral relationship is America's closest, developing and intensifying over the years. Truman's decision to recognize the state of Israel in 1948 was taken in opposition to clear advice from the foreign policy establishment, which emphasized that US national interests would be better served by support for Arab nations with their oil reserves, which were susceptible to Soviet influence. Truman's motivation may partly have been in order to secure the large Jewish vote in New York, but he was also influenced in no small measure by his Christian faith. Special Council to the President Clark Clifford recalled that Truman was influenced by his knowledge of the Bible and specifically passages in Deuteronomy, which he would quote, asserting the legitimate historical right of Jews to Palestine (Clifford 2008).

Since that time, US support for Israel has grown and developed into what successive presidents have described as an 'unbreakable bond' even when that relationship would appear inimical to US national interests. The issue of peace and stability in one of the world's largest oil-producing regions, the importance of the Suez Canal to maritime trade, and the spread of Islamist ideology and anti-Americanism would seem to suggest that US interests lie in persuading Israel to agree a two-state solution with Palestinians and reconcile with her Arab and Iranian neighbours. And yet the US has been unwilling to use its diplomatic and financial influence to secure Israeli concessions in pursuit of peace.

On the contrary, Israel is the largest recipient of US military assistance, receiving over $130 billion in foreign aid since 1949 (Jewish Virtual Library 2017). The outgoing Obama administration signed a memorandum of understanding pledging $38 billion in military assistance from 2019 to 2028, following $30 billion assistance over ten years agreed by the previous Bush administration (Sharp 2016). The United States has defended Israeli interests in vetoing UN Security Council resolutions critical of its actions on over forty occasions. Peace plans brokered by G. H. and G. W. Bush, Clinton, and Obama were all thwarted by a combination of Israeli intransigence and Palestinian suspicion. Demographic changes in the occupied territories of East Jerusalem and the West Bank through large-scale settlement-building and the erection of a separation wall have altered 'facts on the ground' and made a two-state solution increasingly improbable, despite successive US governments claiming this as a key foreign policy objective.

The Israel lobby

How then can we explain this bilateral relationship which seemingly operates in the interests of the smaller party? Israel is a liberal democracy and a market economy in a region dominated by authoritarian regimes or weak governance. The country has strategic importance in a volatile region, where military capability and intelligence gathering can be of benefit to US security interests. This is only part of the explanation, however, and for realists John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt a fuller one can be found only in domestic sources of foreign policy and the disproportionate influence of the Israel lobby (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007).

Mearsheimer and Walt argue that the bilateral relationship is unique and does not behave as other relationships, being premised on unconditional assistance and immune from criticism by US politicians. The lobby convinces US politicians to support Israel under all circumstances and uses its influence to elect supporters to key positions, pressure politicians, and control political discourse. Mearsheimer and Walt argue that the special relationship is in neither nation's best interest, as the lobby prevents America being an honest broker in resolving Middle East conflict (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007).

The Israel lobby includes neo-conservatives, a largely secular pro-Israeli group seeking the maximum projection of US power who were instrumental in the drive for war against Iraq in 2003 and who featured prominently in the first George W. Bush administration. Real and lasting influence, however, resides with pro-Israel American Jewry represented by organizations such as American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), Zionist Organization of America, and Anti-Defamation League. Not all American Jewry are uncritical of Israel, and organizations including J-Street offer a critical friendship rather than a partisan approach in supporting it. The third dimension of the lobby, Christian Zionists, were prominent in the Moral Majority and Christian Coalition and comprise many pro-Israel groupings at local and national level but since 2006 have been effectively represented by John Hagee's Christians United for Israel (CUFI).

American Israel Public Affairs Committee

Since its founding in 1951, AIPAC has emerged as one of the most effective interest groups in the USA. With a membership of over one hundred thousand people committed to the bilateral relationship and prepared to act in support of Israel, the organization enjoys unprecedented bipartisan influence in Congress and the White House. AIPAC lobbies on behalf of Israel to secure US military and economic assistance, to ensure protection from critical UN Security Council Resolutions, to obtain diplomatic cover to enable Israel to complete military operations and continue settlement construction, and to bring about a two-state solution with a Jewish state and a demilitarized Palestine, on such land as Israel is willing to concede. The Jewish population of the United States is less than 2 per cent of the total population and is concentrated in just a handful of states, and yet AIPAC has been able to mobilize its supporters and garner politicians' attention across the political divide so effectively that no resolution critical of Israel has prospects of success in House or Senate.

AIPAC organize their supporters through emailing, conferences, public meetings, training workshops, and an extensive range of publications to lobby their congressional representatives on issues highlighted to them. Politicians from both parties are courted and taken on expenses-paid study visits to Israel, aimed at reinforcing the need to defend Israel and the importance of the special relationship. Regular policy briefings and a legislative agenda on Israel-related issues are provided for politicians, and scorecards of their voting records are distributed to supporters to hold them to account. The annual AIPAC Policy Conference held in Washington DC attracts 18,000 pro-Israel Americans, including two-thirds of members of Congress, majority and minority leaders, and some cabinet members. In election years, presidential candidates attend to pledge unwavering support for Israel.

AIPAC has been effective in directing resources towards the political campaigns of those who support their legislative agenda. Discussion on Israel is controlled by the interest group through the provision of press briefings, instant rebuttals of criticism, denying platforms for those opposed to Israeli policy, and closing down debates by labelling opponents as anti-Semitic. This has led to policy successes in substantial and ongoing US military assistance and cooperation to Israel, continued expansion of Israeli settlements, congressional resolutions and statements affirming Israel's right to self-defence, and the introduction of the Iran Sanctions Act.

Christian Zionism

Complementing the work of AIPAC are conservative evangelicals and fundamentalists who ascribe to Christian Zionism. This group endorse an eschatology known as premillennial dispensationalism, taught by John Nelson Darby in the nineteenth century and popularized by Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* and Jerry Jenkin's *Left Behind* series of end-time novels. In this account, human history is divided into seven time periods, or dispensations, beginning in the Garden of Eden and continuing to the seventh dispensation, Christ's second coming and reign on earth. Premillennial dispensationalists consider that humanity is towards the end of the sixth dispensation and that the second coming can be hastened. Signs of that second coming relate specifically to the return of Jews from around the world to Israel (Jeremiah 23:7–8). They argue that the covenant between God and the Jewish people is eternal and exclusive and cannot be abrogated (Genesis 12:1–7; 15:4–7; 17:1–8; Leviticus 26:44–45; Deuteronomy 7:7–8).

They believe that the historical land of Israel/Palestine has been given to the Jewish people in perpetuity. The biblical promise that those who bless Israel will be blessed and those who curse it will be cursed (Genesis 12:3) is applied to the United States today, where its attitude towards Israel determines whether or not God blesses America (Marsden 2009). The founding of the state of Israel and subsequent seizure of East Jerusalem and the West Bank confirmed to dispensationalists their reading of the end times. The Moral Majority made Israel one of their top priorities because in the words of Jerry Falwell: 'Every nation that has ever persecuted the Jews has felt the hard hand of God on them. Every nation that has ever stood with the Jews has felt the hand of God's blessing on them. I firmly believe God has blessed America because America has blessed the Jew' (Falwell 1980: 113).

Since 2006 John Hagee has organized Christian Zionists across America and beyond to publically support Israel, in celebration nights to honour Israel, and in lobbying Congress and the White House. With a membership of over three million people, the growth of the interest group has been exponential. CUFI comprises mainly, but not exclusively, conservative evangelicals who make up the base of the Republican Party. Their bipartisan reach is not as extensive as that of AIPAC, but their influence in Republican circles is greater. Hagee insists that Israel has a right to the land archaeologically, historically, strategically, through humanitarian concern to provide them a protected homeland, to counter terrorism, and ultimately because 'God said so!' (Hagee 2007: 239-39).

CUFI operates on a similar basis to AIPAC in terms of lobbying but also counts many more supporters and activists within the thousands of churches across the country. At a moment's notice, thousands of activists have been prepared to march on Washington or fill their representative's email inbox with supplications on Israel's behalf. It makes common cause with AIPAC in encouraging sanctions and opposing US rapprochement with Iran, in seeking to criminalize and demonize the global Boycott, Divest and Sanctions movement through equating opposition to Israeli policies with anti-Semitism, and in supporting the restriction of funding to the Palestinian Authority. The Trump administration includes a number of Christian Zionists including Vice-President Mike Pence, who confirmed during the 2017 CUFI Washington Summit that Israel's cause 'is our cause, her values are our values, and her fight is our fight' (Pence 2017).

KEY POINTS

- Israel receives in excess of $3 billion per annum in US military assistance.
- Mearsheimer and Walt (2007) claim that the Israel lobby actually works against US national interests through pressuring politicians to act in Israel's rather than the US's interests.

Global war on terror

The attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon by al-Qaeda on 11 September 2001, early in the presidency of George W. Bush, transformed US foreign policy and set the country on a global war against Islamist terror groups which continues to the present day. Bush was a conservative evangelical whose faith heavily influenced his world view and actions (Bush 1999). He had secured the overwhelming backing of white evangelicals to deliver the narrowest of victories in the disputed 2000 election. Once he was in office, Bible study and prayer became a fact of life for those in the administration. Evangelicals were welcome in the White House and appointed to key positions,

including chief speechwriter Michael Gerson, Attorney General John Ashcroft, and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice (Aikman 2004).

Bush's response to the attack was to frame it in religious terms of good and evil, call people to prayer, emphasize the Judeo-Christian nature of American society by use of Biblical references, and affirm American exceptionalism (see Key quotes 19.2). In his address to the nation on the day of the attacks he declared that 'America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world … Today, our nation saw evil, the very worst of human nature.' He prayed that the country would be 'comforted by a power greater than any of us' before citing Psalm 23 verse 4 and declaring that 'we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in the world' (Bush 2004: 2–3). The following day was declared a National Day of Prayer and Remembrance to find healing and recovery in the face of evil for a nation which would 'remain strong and united', 'one Nation under God' (Bush 2004: 4).

A ceremony held in the National Cathedral, Washington, DC on 14 September provided Bush with the platform to share his world view with a grieving nation: 'This world He created is of moral design. Grief and tragedy and hatred are only for a time. Goodness, remembrance, and love have no end' (Bush 2004: 6). The homily ends quoting Roman 8: 38–9 that nothing 'can separate us from God's love'. On 23 September, at a joint session of Congress, Bush emphasized that America's quarrel was not with Muslims but rather with 'a radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them' (Bush 2004: 14). Nations were given a choice of either being with America or being with the terrorists. For Bush, ultimate victory was assured because God watches over America: 'Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them' (Bush 2004: 17).

The Manichean division of light and darkness, good and evil, was to become a continuing theme of the Bush administration's approach to the war on terror, and would extend to approaches to Islamists and later to his depiction of Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as an 'axis of evil'. Such a world view resonated with conservative evangelicals, who remained the most steadfast supporters and participants in the war on terror and the Iraq War, with US military recruitment disproportionately from the Bible Belt (Kane 2005). Many conservative

KEY QUOTES 19.2: RELIGION AND THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

Richard Land and leaders of Christian right's letter of support for George W. Bush going to war in Iraq 2002

We believe that your policies concerning the ongoing international terrorist campaign against America are both right and just. Specifically, we believe that your stated policies concerning Saddam Hussein and his headlong pursuit and development of biochemical and nuclear weapons of mass destruction are prudent and fall well within the time-honored criteria of just war theory as developed by Christian theologians in the late fourth and early fifth centuries A.D.

(*Land 2002*)

President George W. Bush, State of the Union Address, 2003

Americans are a free people, who know that freedom is the right of every person and the future of every nation. The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world; it is God's gift to humanity.

We Americans have faith in ourselves, but not in ourselves alone. We do not claim to know all the ways of Providence, yet we can trust in them, placing our confidence in the loving God behind all of life and all of history. May he guide us now, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

(*Bush 2003*)

President Obama's Cairo speech to the Muslim world, June 2009

I've come here to Cairo to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based on mutual interest and mutual respect, and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap, and share common principles—principles of justice and progress; tolerance and the dignity of all human beings.

(*Obama 2009*)

President Trump's speech to Arab leaders in Saudi Arabia, May 2017

This is not a battle between different faiths, different sects, or different civilizations.

This is a battle between barbaric criminals who seek to obliterate human life, and decent people of all religions who seek to protect it.

This is a battle between Good and Evil.

(*Trump 2017*)

evangelical leaders found problematic Bush's portrayal of Islam as a religion of peace and Islamism as a distortion. Franklin Graham, son of Billy, did not see Islam as 'a wonderful peaceful religion' but rather 'wicked, violent and not of the same god', and Jerry Falwell described Muhammad as a 'terrorist' (Marsden 2008: 237). CBN and other Christian broadcasters regularly portrayed Islam as violent and inimical to American values.

Bush consistently opposed such views, confirmed his view that Islam was a peaceful religion, and sought to incorporate Muslims within civil religion rhetoric (Bush 2002). However, as America became increasingly embroiled in conflicts in Muslim-majority countries, including Iraq and Afghanistan, and in support for Israel's military actions in the West Bank, Gaza, and Southern Lebanon, the distinction between Muslims and jihadist and Islamist groups became less clearly expressed. President Obama continued the policy of incorporating American Muslims within a civil religion discourse and set out to restore US relations with the Muslim majority world through a key speech in Cairo in 2009. One of his liberal evangelical spiritual advisors, Jim Wallis, had been a constant critic of Bush's foreign policy and the influence of the Christian right on politics (Wallis 2005). Evangelicals for the most part remained unconvinced and considered Obama suspect on account of his family background and of his describing America as no longer a Christian nation but one of many faiths and none (Obama 2006).

General Jerry Boykin, who had been in charge for the hunt for Mullah Omar, Osama bin Laden, and Saddam Hussein, saw the war on terror as a spiritual battle between Christianity and Islam. He spoke in churches across America during Bush's first term in office, and after military service Boykin maintained this position throughout the Obama administration, accusing US mosques of 'spewing out jihadist rhetoric' and stating that 'almost every Islamic organization in America is a front for funding Islamic extremism' (Boykin 2009). In 2012 he was appointed Executive Vice-President of the Family Research Council. Ralph Drollinger, an evangelical minister, set up Capitol Ministries in 2010 to hold weekly evangelical Bible studies in Congress sponsored by around seventy members of both houses of Congress. The group produced a 'Terrorist Training Sensitivity' booklet for congressional representatives in order to provide a 'biblical' perspective on combatting terrorism. The booklet asserts that 'not every Muslim is a terrorist but every international terrorist in recent history has been a Muslim' (Capitol Ministries 2014: 4).

This blurring of distinctions between the radical Islamism practised by al-Qaeda, so-called Islamic State (Daesh), and other jihadist organizations, and mainstream Sunni and Shiite Muslims, has been a common feature of conservative evangelical approaches to the war on terror; where they are able to exercise influence, conservative evangelicals have sought to link Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah, Muslim Brotherhood, al-Qaeda, and Daesh as a common threat. Such thinking also lay behind the Trump administration's attempt to ban travel to the United States from seven designated Muslim-majority countries.

Trump secured the 2016 presidential election with 81 per cent support from white evangelicals and maintains an evangelical advisory board. Evangelicals and conservative Catholics have greater access to the White House than ever before and are regularly consulted on policy matters. Ralph Drollinger conducts weekly Bible studies in the White House sponsored by nine evangelical members of the cabinet, including Vice-President Mike Pence, CIA Director Mike Pompeo, and Attorney General Jeff Sessions. The US Ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, is also an evangelical, ensuring that religion continues to play a key role in determining approaches towards the global war on terror (see Major debates and their impact 19.1).

Faith-based diplomacy

In 1996 Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson edited a seminal work entitled *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft*. Behind their initiative lay the changing realities of international politics after the Cold War. Rather than ideological divisions Johnston, like Huntington (1997), envisaged a world where conflict would be based on clashes of communal identity 'on the basis of race, nationality, ethnicity, or religion' (Johnston and Sampson 1996: 3). Where Huntington offered a counsel of despair, highlighting the problem of multiculturalism as threatening Western civilization, Johnston proposed recognizing and enhancing the capacity of religion to be part of the solution. Unfortunately the US foreign policy establishment was ill-equipped to do so, operating in a secular paradigm out of step with much of the rest of the world. The proposed solution was to actively engage with religious actors in diplomacy and to educate and train those working in foreign affairs (Johnston and Sampson 1996; Johnston 2003, 2011).

19.1 MAJOR DEBATES AND THEIR IMPACT: IRAQ—JUST OR UNJUST WAR?

- The Bush administration's given rationale for war was that following 9/11 America had to embark on a 'global war on terror' to defeat its enemies. Iraq, under Saddam Hussein, was alleged to be developing weapons of mass destruction, which posed a threat to American interests in the region and could fall into the hands of al-Qaeda.
- 'Just war' tradition seeks to provide a moral and ethical compass for warfare. In the decision to go to war (*jus ad bellum*) there should be just cause; war should only be declared by a legitimate authority, embarked upon for the right intention, with a high probability of success, and as a last resort; and the expected gains should be proportionate to the harms caused (Elshtain 1992; Johnson 1981; Walzer 1977).
- Once battle has commenced, then ethical standards of warfare apply (*jus in bello*). Warfare is directed only at combatants and not civilian populations, and the war must be proportionate, with harm to civilians and property minimized. Military targets must be necessary to defeat the enemy, prisoners are to receive fair treatment and not tortured or made to fight against former comrades, and no extreme measures such as rape or weapons of mass destruction are to be used (Snauwaert 2004).
- The Iraq War as an unjust war: Pope John Paul II and the US Catholic Bishops said it could not be just because a potential attack by Iraq did not meet the criteria of just cause, right intention, last resort, or proportionality (Bruni 2003).
- The Iraq War as a just war—Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention roused conservative evangelicals in support of going to war. As a direct response to the Pope, Land joined with other Christian right leaders in writing to Bush (see Key quotes 19.2) supporting a preventive strike on Iraq as being just because of the aim to halt Saddam Hussein's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and threat to US interests (Land 2002).

International religious freedom

Religious actors continued to pressure their political representatives on issues of religious persecution. Nina Shea, director of the Center for Religious Freedom, Freedom House, worked with Michael Horowitz from the Hudson Institute in bringing together a coalition of conservative evangelicals, Jews, Catholics, and neo-conservatives to campaign on the issue in the mid-1990s. The Christian right organized supporters to lobby congressional representatives, a task made easier by Republicans taking control of both houses of Congress in the 1994 midterm elections, resulting in Christian right stalwarts Jesse Helms and Sam Brownback being appointed chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Chair of the Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asia Affairs respectively.

Shea and Horowitz's campaign was taken up by Congressman Frank Wolf and Senator Arlen Spector, who introduced the International Religious Freedom Act 1998, ensuring that US foreign policy thereafter must take into account, and respond to, violations of religious freedom perpetrated by other countries. The act required an annual report to Congress on progress and established an ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom within the Department of State, a special advisor within the National Security Council, and a Commission on International Religious Freedom. Shea was appointed as commissioner, serving 1999–2012. Other prominent commissioners included Richard Land (2001–12), Elliott Abrams (1999–2001, 2012–14), and John Bolton (1999–2001). Sam Brownback was nominated by Donald Trump in 2017 as ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom. The commission produces its own report on religious freedom, highlighting countries of particular concern, which the Department of State must report on and consider for action.

Faith-based initiatives and US foreign policy

Upon entering office in 2001, one of George W. Bush's first acts was to issue an executive order establishing the White House Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives. As a born-again Christian, Bush believed in the transformational power of faith to solve individual and societal problems. As governor of Texas he had permitted the funding of faith-based organizations (FBOs) to run prison and drug rehabilitation programmes and set about encouraging the involvement of federally funded faith-based provision at a national level (Bush 1999, 2010). FBOs were to be encouraged to bid for grants to deliver federal programmes, the only proviso being that they could receive funding for service delivery but not for religious activity including prayer and proselytizing. In December 2002 the initiative was extended to the State Department and to USA International Development (USAID).

The USAID Center for Faith-based and Community Initiatives was now to actively encourage conservative evangelical FBOs to deliver programmes. In the first five years of the project, these received $1.7 billion, including World Vision ($374 million), Franklin Graham's Samaritan's Purse ($31 million), Pat Robertson's Operation Blessing ($392,000), and Voice of the Martyrs [($306,000); Marsden 2008: 130]. The problematic nature of US largesse being delivered by proselytizing FBOs, where the distinction between religious mission and US assistance became increasingly blurred, was largely overlooked by the Bush administration.

The popularity of this initiative within religious communities, and the value in US FBOs subcontracting work to partners in the field, encouraged President Barack Obama to continue the programme throughout his administration. Working through local FBOs had the benefit of utilizing their developed infrastructure and expertise with less likelihood of corruption than distributing resources through local or national government. Under Obama the previous trend towards preferring Christian, especially evangelical, FBOs altered, with Jewish and Muslim FBOs also receiving funding.

President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

Conservative evangelicals made good use of their new status and increased access to the Bush White House and were instrumental in bringing about significant US assistance to seek to eradicate HIV / AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria in Africa. Jesse Helms was convinced by U2 lead singer Bono of the need to support the campaign for debt relief for poorer countries and assistance programmes, particularly around the issue of AIDS. Helms persuaded the White House to meet Bono and eventually facilitated George W. Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) in Africa. The programme enjoyed bipartisan support and between 2004 and 2017 received $72 billion to provide treatment, testing, care, counselling, and training (PEPFAR 2017a, 2017b).

Although PEPFAR represented the greatest investment in foreign assistance to Africa ever seen, the programme was not without its controversy. The re-implementation of the 'global gag rule' (see Controversies 19.1; see also Chapter 20 and Major debates and their impact 20.1) prevented those in receipt of US assistance from being able to provide advice on abortion. A caveat in the assistance restricted reproductive health advice, and one-third of the funds available for family planning advice were designated to the promotion of abstinence-until-marriage programmes and allowed FBOs to refuse to work with high-risk groups they found morally objectionable, such as gay people and prostitutes. The Christian right succeeded in getting needle exchange programmes banned and defunding International Planned Parenthood and Marie Stopes because of their willingness to provide advice on abortion. Such stipulations were rescinded under the Obama administration and the programme continues to make a significant contribution to the eradication of HIV / AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria in Africa.

CONTROVERSIES 19.1: THE MEXICO CITY POLICY

- Ronald Reagan introduced the Mexico City Policy (MCP) at the Second International Conference on Population in Mexico City in 1984.
- In order to receive US global family planning assistance, the policy requires foreign non-governmental organizations to certify that they will not 'perform or actively promote abortion as a method of family planning' with funds from any source.
- Actively promoting includes advice on abortion, advocating abortion as a means of family planning, or promoting changes to a country's existing laws and practices, and hence critics dubbed it the 'global gag rule'.
- US organizations were not subject to the MCP because under the Helms Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act (1973) they are forbidden from carrying out, or promoting, abortion except for cases of incest, rape, or the health of the woman (Kaiser Foundation 2017).
- The MCP has been rescinded by Democrat presidents and restored by successive Republican presidents.
- Significant sums of money are involved as US NGOs partner with local and international organizations overseas to deliver health care programmes. In fiscal year 2017, US global family planning assistance amounted to $600 million.
- Ironically, research suggests that where the MCP is applied the number of abortions actually increase as experienced family planning practitioners have fewer resources available to provide contraception and educational programmes (Bendavid et al. 2011).

Office of Religion and Global Affairs

The Obama administration sought to build on the faith-based initiatives of the Bush administration. On entering office, Obama established the President's Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, comprising prominent faith leaders who were tasked, among other things, with examining religion and global affairs. One of the key recommendations was establishing the Office of Religion and Global Affairs (ORGA). The office was established in 2013 and advises the State Department leadership on all matters pertaining to religion. ORGA reflects recognition in the administration of the need for religious literacy across government and particularly in foreign affairs. Under successive administrations religion has become increasingly important and is now factored into training at the Foreign Service Institute and the Department of Defense.

ORGA informs government about the impact of religion in different international contexts and engages with faith-based actors and experts to develop training and education around religious literacy and its value in foreign affairs. Three positons have been created to reflect this increased engagement: the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, the Special Representative to Muslim Communities, and the Special Envoy to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The aim is to utilize religion and religious actors to achieve US foreign policy objectives through effective soft power. Increased religious literacy has now become a requisite across the US foreign policy establishment.

Conclusion

Religion has been a constant factor in US foreign policy, often unacknowledged but present nonetheless. At times religion's presence is overt and recognizable, as when Truman defied his foreign policy establishment to recognize the state of Israel, Reagan invoked images of the 'evil empire', or Bush created the Center for Faith-based and Community Initiatives. At other times the influence of religion is harder to detect when religious voices become disparate among so many critiquing or supporting US foreign policy. The nature of American exceptionalism and the deployment of civil religion as a rhetorical device by presidents, together with the continuing active presence of religion in the lives of so many Americans, mean that is it impossible to disaggregate religion from all aspects of the US polity.

This chapter has shown that religion is an essential component of our overall understanding of US foreign policy. Even if we had previously been inclined to view foreign policy through an exclusively secular lens, the events of 9/11 brought into stark relief the continued relevance of religion in the international arena. The Bush and Obama administrations sought to address some of these issues by engaging FBOs in delivering assistance, upholding religious freedom, and increasing religious literacy within government and the foreign policy establishment. The Trump administration's close relationship with Christian right supporters ensures that religion will remain vital to any understanding of US foreign policy.

KEY POINTS

- In a world increasingly defined by cultural difference, faith-based diplomacy has the potential to increase US soft power.
- The USAID Center for Faith-based and Community Initiatives enables faith-based organizations to deliver US overseas assistance.
- The use of faith-based organizations to deliver federally funded programmes challenges the separation of church and state but enjoys bipartisan support.
- Religious literacy in US foreign policy is increasingly seen as a requisite in advancing US national interests.

QUESTIONS

1. How important is religion in US foreign policy?
2. Were Christian realists right in arguing that the main difference between communism and liberalism was religion?
3. To what extent did Truman's faith influence his decision to recognize Israel?

4. What role, if any, did religion play in the conduct of the Cold War?
5. What is civil religion?
6. Is the Israel lobby inimical to US national interests?
7. Does the global war on terror represent a clash of civilizations?
8. Was the Iraq War a just war?
9. What is the global gag rule?
10. Could faith-based diplomacy transform US foreign policy?

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You can find a range of online resources to support your learning at www.oup.com/uk/cox_stokes3e/.

20

Gender

Sylvia Bashevkin

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Introduction

Close to thirty years before the time of writing, Cynthia Enloe (1989: 3) argued that scholars of international relations had neglected women for so long that the nearly exclusive presence of men in the realm of foreign affairs seemed quite natural. Enloe as well as many other feminist authors effectively challenged this outlook and, in so doing, illuminated areas that conventional foreign policy research had persistently ignored. They explored gender dynamics inside the diplomatic institutions of countries including the United States and, more specifically, probed patterns of employment at the US State Department, obstacles limiting women's upward mobility, and social movement influences on foreign policy.

This chapter opens with an overview of key perspectives that can be drawn from the work of Enloe (1989) and other feminist writers. It then turns to a series of empirical questions that follow from this background. When and how did women enter the main institutions of American foreign policy? What barriers confronted them? How did female diplomats respond to discriminatory attitudes and practices? In what ways have women leaders shaped the directions of US foreign policy? How do sexual orientation politics figure in State Department actions?

This chapter's main thesis is twofold. First, consistent with the findings of Enloe and others who highlight women's invisibility in international relations, we see that few females

became US foreign policy leaders prior to the 1980s. By contrast, women have been well represented in the ranks of the State Department clerical staff for many decades. Second, we will see how efforts to alter these patterns and to integrate women's rights and gay rights claims in the content of US foreign policy have faced strong resistance.

Feminist perspectives

The field of feminist international relations has grown rapidly in size and gained greater academic visibility as well as legitimacy. Although multiple streams of theorizing and empirical analysis have developed since the 1980s, practitioners share a commitment to exploring gender dynamics and, in particular, women's contributions to world politics, broadly defined. Research in the field draws to our attention the fact that as a domain of human endeavour, global affairs has been dominated by men—whether male heads of state, ministers of foreign affairs, trade negotiators, or leaders of supra-national institutions such as the United Nations. Scholars such as Peterson and Runyan (2010: 64) acknowledge the internal variety within feminist activism and academic work; in their words, 'the common thread among feminisms is an orientation valuing women's diverse experiences and taking seriously women's interests in and capacities for bringing about social and political change.'

Feminist scholarship demonstrates that at the level of the nation state, relatively few females have reached senior positions in the political executive. Studies of cabinet posts across the advanced industrial world show that since the late 1960s, women tended to be appointed to relatively low-status, 'soft' ministries with responsibility for domestic social policy including welfare, health, and education. By contrast, far fewer females were assigned to lead higher-prestige or 'hard' departments such as foreign affairs or finance (see Krook and O'Brien 2012: 842–5).

Consistent with this pattern, the first American woman to reach cabinet rank was Frances Perkins, named as Secretary of Labor in 1933. In the field of foreign policy, the first female cabinet appointee did not arrive until nearly fifty years later. She was Jeane Kirkpatrick, who served in the initial Reagan administration of the early 1980s as US ambassador to the United Nations. Not until 1997 was Madeleine Albright sworn in as the first woman secretary of state. In 2005, Condoleezza Rice became the first African-American woman to serve as the top US diplomat.

How do scholars explain the historic absence of females from positions of foreign policy responsibility? A widely held argument posits that deep-seated assumptions about gender underpin men's presence and women's rarity in these authoritative diplomatic roles. According to Enloe (1989: 4), 'Only men, not women or children, have been imagined capable of the sort of public decisiveness international politics is presumed to require.'

This explanation points to Western philosophic traditions that associate men with the qualities of not just physical strength and prowess in combat, but also success as assertive, effective public leaders. Under the terms of what political theorists call a *public/private dichotomy*, women have been portrayed since the classical period as deficient or deviant relative to men (see Key quotes 20.1). Females are viewed not only as physically weaker but also as partial or incomplete citizens who operate outside the formal political forum. They are associated with private domains such as family and home, where their assigned role has usually been to care for others and to foster social stability and consensus (see Elshtain 1974).

KEY QUOTES 20.1: ORIGINS OF THE PUBLIC/PRIVATE DICHOTOMY

Aristotle radically bifurcates public (political) from private (apolitical) realms. There are greater (public) associations and lesser (private) associations. Fully realized moral goodness and reason are attainable only through participation in public life, and this involvement is reserved to free, adult males. Women *share* in goodness and rationality in the limited sense appropriate to their confinement in a lesser association, the household.

(Elshtain 1974: 455, italics in original)

This background sheds light on the ways in which we continue to learn and think about international politics. News stories from war zones tend to highlight the courageous acts of male fighters alongside the fear and vulnerability of civilians—most of whom are women and children. Adult women whose narratives reach us are often introduced as the mothers, daughters, wives, or sisters of combatants. They grieve, perhaps beside a scene of dust-covered rubble, over the deaths and injuries of members of their families. By contrast, the

same accounts from journalists in the field may underline the talents and capacities of men (whether political leaders or military fighters) who shield civilians from danger. In this usual framing of world politics, women stand not as agents who make history but rather as passive, submissive objects or victims who depend on men for protection (Elshtain 1995).

What happens to women whose actions violate well-entrenched norms? Feminist writers show how females who have led their communities in times of crisis are hardly acknowledged on the historical record. Yet as Fraser (1988) reports, courageous 'warrior queens' who commanded armies into battle can be dated as far back as Cleopatra and Boudica. Moreover, as Sluga and James (2016) find, female emissaries played important roles in European diplomacy beginning in the early modern period. Despite these well-documented cases, Sluga (2016: 129) observes, women have largely been erased and continue to be erased from 'grand historical narratives' of war and peace.

Research suggests that when women appear in the annals of international politics, they tend to be associated with campaigns to stop or prevent war. Conversely, men are linked to rational, strategic thinking that is seen as better suited to the defence of national interests. Heated debates unfolded in the early twentieth century in the US, the UK, and elsewhere over whether women should be allowed to serve as diplomats. Such debates often pivoted around the question of what attributes females would bring from the private to the public sphere. Would women be such nurturing, pacifist 'beautiful souls' that they compromised their country's security (see Elshtain 1995)? Did not reason rather than passion rest at the core of foreign service professionalism (see McCarthy 2014)?

It is ironic that peace activists have often relied on the same binary conception of men's and women's attributes, which contrast an ostensibly masculine willingness to go to war with women's presumed preference for calm and serenity. For instance, maternal imagery rested at the heart of arguments voiced during the period of the First World War by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. WILPF and other similar organizations maintained that extending the soothing hand of womanhood from the home to world politics would create a more peaceful world (see Beers 2016).

This reliance on gender dichotomies did little to open doors for women who sought diplomatic careers. Instead, efforts to associate all women with motherhood and peace highlighted a tendency toward *essentialism*: that is, it homogenized the group and ignored important internal and, in particular, intersectional types of variation that characterize both women and men (see Key quotes 20.2). If every woman was a mother or, at the very least, a caring, nurturing individual who sought to avoid conflict, then could females be trusted to defend national interests and, in particular, to prioritize state interests above hopes for a more serene world? Tickner (2001: 60) argues that the consistent use of maternal images by peace groups holds significant consequences in that it 'allows men to remain in control and continue to dominate the agenda of world politics, and it continues to render women's voices as inauthentic in matters of foreign policymaking'.

In particular, essentialist thinking glosses over *intersectionality*, meaning a wide range of differences within gender categories that may emerge along such lines as class, race, and sexual orientation. Traditional views of masculinity, for example, tend to associate that concept with public power even though the influence in Western systems of men who are affluent, white, and heterosexual generally eclipses that of those who come from socio-economically disadvantaged, racial minority, and sexual minority backgrounds. It is not surprising that men who lack the attributes of what Connell (1995) terms 'hegemonic masculinity' are seen as weak and feminine, and carry 'subordinated masculinities' relative to males who command the demographic characteristics seen to be typical of decision makers.

KEY QUOTES 20.2: WHY AVOID ESSENTIALISM?

Contemporary feminist scholars engage in intersectional analysis to avoid the practice of 'essentialism', or the assumption that, for example, all women or all men or all those within a given race or class share the same experiences and interests. Only by recognizing how, for example, some women have benefited by the racial, class, sexual, and national original oppression of other women, whereas many men subordinated by these very characteristics still exercise gender oppression, can we advance a more comprehensive notion of gender equality that sees it as indivisible from racial, class, and sexual equality and equality among nations.

(Peterson and Runyan 2010: 26–7)

KEY POINTS

- Scholars of feminist international relations emphasize the historic absence of women from foreign policy leadership posts.
- Essentialist understandings of gender ignore significant variations along such lines as class, race, and sexual orientation.
- Notions of a public/private split underpin ideas that women are not suited to the practice of world politics.
- Arguments against the admission of women to diplomatic positions have relied on the same public/private dichotomy.
- Pacifist campaigns have often relied on maternal imagery in claiming that women can create a more serene world.

Entry to foreign service positions

For students of US foreign policy, feminist scholarship invites us to ask where women have been situated within the State Department as a lead diplomatic institution. What are the characteristics of women who reached senior positions? In what types of geographic locations did their careers unfold?

Empirical research finds that in the US, as in other advanced industrial countries, the numbers of women who held senior foreign policy posts increased markedly between the mid-1970s and the first decade of the twenty-first century (Bashevkin 2014). As demonstrated in Table 20.1, female chiefs of mission were far more likely to be appointed by US presidents in recent years than previously. Yet this pattern of ascent can be seen as fairly slow given that the formal prohibition against women's appointment to US diplomatic posts ended in 1920. Moreover, a closer look at the details reveals that female chiefs of mission were usually assigned to small and uncontroversial countries that wielded limited influence in international politics.

It is important to note that the decision to open diplomatic posts to both genders in 1920 did not affect an unwritten rule which blocked the entry of married women. As Nash (2016: 223) writes, the prohibition against wives was 'not just a practice, but rather a *de facto* State Department rule, lasting until 1971'. Discriminatory attitudes which questioned women's suitability to the field, combined with the marriage bar and the fact that career appointees needed to pass the Foreign Service entrance exam, meant that numbers of female recruits remained very low. As of 1930, only six women had entered the US Foreign Service. Most stayed for much shorter terms than their male counterparts (see Nash 2016: 223).

Table 20.1 Female chiefs of mission by presidential administration, 1933-2016

President	Female chiefs of mission appointed
Franklin Roosevelt (1933-1945)	2
Harry Truman (1945–53)	2
Dwight Eisenhower (1953–61)	4
John Kennedy (1961–3)	2
Lyndon Johnson (1963–9)	4
Richard Nixon (1969–74)	4
Gerald Ford (1974–7)	7
Jimmy Carter (1977–81)	18
Ronald Reagan (1981–9)	22
George H. W. Bush (1989–93)	28
Bill Clinton (1993–2001)	87
George W. Bush (2001–9)	118
Barack Obama (2009–16)	138

Source: American Foreign Service Association (2016).

In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed Ruth Bryan Owen as chief of mission to Denmark and Iceland. Owen thus became the first woman to represent the US at the rank of minister. Unlike earlier female diplomats who had taken a professional career path via the Foreign Service entry exam, Owen was a partisan appointee who held the distinction of having served as the first woman elected to the House of Representatives from the American South. Many of the female diplomats appointed after her shared similar characteristics: they rose via a party rather than professional route, and were posted to countries that did not play major international roles.

The manner in which early women diplomats worked to represent US interests also stands out. Florence Jaffray Harriman was a well-connected Democrat whom Roosevelt named in 1937 as chief of mission to Norway. She and Owen found innovative ways to wield clout in northern Europe. By reaching over the heads of political leaders and fellow diplomats who may have doubted their abilities, they developed a populist approach which attracted attention

Table 20.2 Ambassadorial appointments by gender and region of destination, from start of US diplomatic relations through 2016

Appointment		Men	Women
Overall	4,633	91%	9%
South & Central Asia	197	83%	17%
Sub-Saharan Africa	852	84%	16%
East Asia & Pacific	536	86%	14%
Europe & Eurasia	1,408	94%	6%
Western hemisphere	1,246	94%	6%
Middle East	394	94%	6%

Source: Pew Research Center (2016).

from local media as well as the general public. Owen travelled extensively and became the first American minister to visit Greenland. Harriman joined Norwegian cod fisherman on their annual Arctic expedition (see Nash 2016: 225, 226).

It is helpful to juxtapose the appointment of these female emissaries with the broader composition of the State Department. Owen and Harriman were white, well-connected party stalwarts who served at a time when race and social privilege figured a great deal in the US Foreign Service (see McKenzie 2015). In contrast to their status as diplomats, most female employees of the State Department held less prestigious and lower-paid clerical jobs. During the period of the Second World War, for example, there were two women in US chief of mission posts and about 800 who worked as secretaries for the Department of State (see Table 20.1 and Wright 2005).

The advent of the Cold War heightened concerns for Western security and, in particular, trained a spotlight on risks that were perceived to be posed by the presence of unmarried female as well as homosexual male diplomats (see Johnson 2004). The idea that sexual liaisons would compromise national interests helps to explain how the representation of women in US Foreign Service officer roles declined in the 1960s from 10 to 5 per cent (McKenzie 2015: par. 15). No woman ascended through the career foreign service to become a chief of mission until 1953, when President Eisenhower named Frances Willis as ambassador to Switzerland. Willis held a PhD in political science and taught in the field before she began her diplomatic career. She passed the entry test to the US Foreign Service in 1927. Whether because of personal preference or the rules that were in force at the time, Willis never married.[1]

Like Owen and Harriman, Willis and many subsequent women diplomats were dispatched to relatively minor countries that did not wield significant power on the world stage. In addition, their numbers at elite levels were vastly overshadowed by numbers in the clerical ranks. As Wright (2005: 2) observes, 'women were appointed to 31 senior positions (ambassadors or assistant secretaries of state) in the U.S. diplomatic corps' in the four decades after 1933. This sum represented less than 4 per cent, or a tiny fraction, of the number of women serving in secretarial jobs inside the State Department during the 1940s. As shown in Table 20.2, American women held less than 10 per cent of ambassadorial posts from the start of relations with other countries through 2016. Most significantly, few women were posted to important American allies in the western hemisphere or Europe, or to areas of strategic interest such as the Middle East.

KEY POINTS

- Numbers of female diplomats have grown since the bar against their appointment ended in 1920.
- Married women were not allowed in the Foreign Service until 1971.
- Early appointees were party activists who practiced populist or people-to-people diplomacy.
- Women tended to be dispatched to minor powers with limited international influence.

Challenging barriers to upward mobility

Instead of accepting discriminatory practices inside the State Department, some women directly challenged these patterns. The Women's Action Organization (WAO), created in the late 1960s, pressed successfully to end the marriage bar in 1971. Alison Palmer, who worked as a junior Foreign Service officer in the early 1960s, lodged a sex discrimination suit that wound its way for decades through the State Department bureaucracy as well as the courts.

Palmer was unable to progress upward from the post of US vice consul in Leopoldville, Congo, until the ambassador to Ethiopia offered her a post that turned out to entail assisting his wife (Alison Palmer Papers 2010: 2). Official explanations suggested that Palmer and other white women failed to secure promotions because they were at risk of sexual advances and possibly assault by African men. Palmer, however, maintained that in her career other US government employees constituted the main sources of 'harassment and sexual threats' (McKenzie 2015: par. 25). Palmer lodged an internal grievance as a State Department employee that alleged sex discrimination.

In 1969, the State Department's Equal Employment Office concluded in her favour. The decision was neither made public nor noted in her personnel file (Alison Palmer papers 2010: 2). Palmer appealed to the Civil Service Commission in 1971. After convening hearings, the commission ruled that Palmer should receive a promotion as well as compensation for salary she would have been paid in a more senior position.

Together with eight others, Palmer lodged a class action lawsuit against the State Department in 1976. It charged the department with discriminating against women when they joined the unit, limiting their career mobility, and offering them weaker performance appraisals and honours. Although a federal district court rejected these claims in 1985, subsequent appeals and district court decisions endorsed the arguments of Palmer and her fellow plaintiffs (see Palmer et al. 1986). Reports indicate costs for the class action suit were more than $200,000 and half of Palmer's pension (McGlen and Sarkees 1993: 289).

What did class action litigation accomplish? The State Department was forced to take corrective action. The unit informed six hundred women that they might be eligible for better-paid positions. It recognized publicly that women failed sections of the Foreign Service examination at higher rates than men. The Department of State canceled the test for 1989 and then redesigned it (see Gamarekian 1989).

Efforts by the US government to appeal parts of the 1989 ruling that favoured Palmer meant that the lawsuit dragged on for decades. In late 2009, Palmer and her attorneys announced they were ending legal proceedings. The US District Court for the District of Columbia then dismissed the case on the grounds that all parties agreed the State Department had complied with earlier judgments.

Palmer's initial grievance and subsequent class action lawsuit remained contentious even after 2009. For example, a senior woman policy coordinator at the State Department saw Palmer's criticisms as counterproductive. According to Stephanie Smith Kinney, alleging that the entry test was unfair caused reforms that undermined women's status in the organization. In Kinney's words, 'those of us who did it the hard way paid a heavy price in male resentment and ridicule for years afterward because of all those women who "got in for free" or got "free promotions"'.[2]

It is clear that after Palmer levelled her allegations, women reached positions of unprecedented seniority. The first female to serve as assistant secretary of state was appointed in 1973. Within four years, a woman attained the status of undersecretary of state. When Rozanne Ridgway was named head of the European and Canadian bureau in 1985, the State Department gained its first female section chief. Between 1985 and 1989, the proportion of women in senior posts increased from 3 to 6 per cent. At the level of Class I officer or just below elite status, women's numbers grew from roughly 20 at the time Palmer's class action litigation commenced in the 1970s to roughly 150 by the late 1980s (Gamarekian 1989).

KEY POINTS

- Formal allegations that sex discrimination blocked diplomatic careers were initially raised in the 1960s.
- Alison Palmer and eight others commenced class action litigation in 1976.
- US courts found in favour of Palmer and her fellow plaintiffs.
- The State Department took corrective action, including revision of the Foreign Service exam.

Assessing feminist influence

Have rising numbers of female diplomats made women's equality a substantive pivot in US foreign policy? Comparative research finds that feminist policy emphasis varies with the ideology of the party in power. Decision makers from left and centrist parties in the global North tend to promote pro-equality positions more than those from the political right (Bashevkin 2014).

Patterns of US foreign policy are not only consistent with this proposition but also show the clout wielded by counter-movement and, in particular, anti-feminist interests when Republicans control the executive branch (Bob 2012). In 1980, social conservatives influenced the Republican Party to the point that the official campaign platform opposed reproductive choice as well as the entrenchment of gender equality in the US constitution (Melich 1996). Survey research indicates that a considerable gender gap emerged in 1980 such that men were more likely than women to vote for Republican presidential candidate Ronald Reagan (Gilens 1988).

The impact of traditionalist views on foreign policy became clear in the lead-up to the 1984 election. Social conservatives lobbied Reagan and his advisors to block US funding for abortion and family planning services in developing countries, including by curtailing support for non-governmental organizations that paid for reproductive health programs using money from other sources (see Major debates and their impact 20.1). What became known as the Mexico City Policy (termed the 'global gag rule' by critics; see also Chapter 19 and Controversies 19.1) was first announced at a UN population conference in 1984 (Finkle and Crane 1985; US Policy Statement 1984). It was enforced by Reagan and subsequent Republican presidents George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush. The provision prevents the United States Agency for International Development from funding any NGO which 'performs or actively promotes abortion as a method of family planning' outside the US, including by offering advice, counseling, or information about abortion (Mexico City Policy, as quoted in Baker 2009).

Reflecting closer ties between the Democratic Party and feminist interests, the Mexico City Policy has been overturned by Democratic presidents. Bill Clinton announced within days of his swearing-in ceremony in January 1993 that he was reversing the practices of the Reagan/Bush years in order to widen international access to family planning programs. In January 2009, a written statement by Barack Obama described the consequences of the Mexico City Policy as follows: 'For the past eight years, they have undermined efforts to promote safe and effective voluntary family planning in developing countries.' In signing an executive order to revoke the provision, Obama maintained 'it is right for us to rescind this policy and restore critical efforts to protect and empower women and promote global economic development' (Obama, quoted in Baker 2009).

Parallel differences between the two major parties also emerge on other measures of US foreign policy. For example, senior women appointed by Democratic presidents have invested greater effort than their Republican counterparts in building networks of female decision makers and in using those networks to advance an equality agenda at the international level. As a member of the Clinton administration during the 1990s, Madeleine Albright believed firmly in the

MAJOR DEBATES AND THEIR IMPACT 20.1: DOES THE MEXICO CITY POLICY ADVANCE US INTERESTS?

US support for family planning programs is based on respect for human life, enhancement of human dignity, and strengthening of the family. Attempts to use abortion, involuntary sterilization, or other coercive measures in family planning must be shunned, whether exercised against families within a society or against nations within the family of man.

(US Policy Statement for International Conference on Population 1984)

In addition to damaging women's health care all over the world, the global gag rule would deform the political debate over abortion in several foreign legislatures. Because of the gag rule people working with women's health NGOs—precisely the people witnessing the staggering toll taken by unsafe abortion—couldn't participate in debates about liberalization without risking support for their other work. For American presidents since Reagan, either imposing or rescinding the Mexico City ban has become a kind of ritual to mark the arrival of a new political party in the White House.

(Goldberg 2009: 99)

responsibility of female leaders to defend women's rights (see Key quotes 20.3). She brought together women ambassadors to the UN when she served as US emissary to that body and, after becoming the first female secretary of state, created a network of women foreign ministers. Neither Jeane Kirkpatrick nor Condoleezza Rice, who served as senior Republican foreign policy appointees in the Reagan and George W. Bush years respectively, built similar track records. As discussed in the next subsection on the 2016 presidential race, the contributions of Hillary Rodham Clinton as secretary of state during the first Obama term dovetail directly with the efforts Albright made in the 1990s.

KEY QUOTES 20.3: MADELEINE ALBRIGHT ON THE RESPONSIBILITY OF WOMEN LEADERS

There is a special place in hell for women who don't help other women. (Madeleine Albright, Keynote speech at *Celebrating Inspiration* luncheon with the WNBA's All-Decade Team, 2006)

In particular, Albright's networks of female leaders helped to translate an awareness of violence against women then unfolding in Central Europe into tangible policy action. As historian Jelena Batinic notes, media and non-governmental organizations reported in detail during the early 1990s on atrocities in Bosnia, which formed one part of what had been Yugoslavia. Yet these accounts on their own could do little more than illuminate the problem. Thanks to insiders like Albright, Batinic argues, 'For the first time, rape in war found its place on the international agenda and in legal and human rights discourses; it was a crucial moment for feminists to try to make critical interventions into these discourses and to struggle for a feminist reconceptualization of violence against women [as a violation of human rights]' (Batinic, quoted in Garner 2012: 128).

As ambassador to the UN, Albright (2003: 232) encouraged her staff to assist a new tribunal that was formed to investigate events in the former Yugoslavia. Established by the UN Security Council in early 1993, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) gathered testimony from witnesses and victims in order to document organized assaults against women during the Bosnian War. Conducted primarily by Serb militias against Bosniak women, cases of rape during the conflict numbered in the tens of thousands. Evidence that Serb soldiers forcibly enslaved Muslim women and girls, some of them in their early teens, led the tribunal to identify rape and sexual violence not only as crimes against humanity but also as specific war crimes (see Allen 1996; Arbour 2002).

During the first Clinton administration, Albright (2003: 247) served as one of only seven women ambassadors to the UN from the more than 180 member states with permanent representatives. Her network of female emissaries met monthly and pressed for the appointment of Canadian jurist Louise Arbour, the first ever woman chief prosecutor on the ICTY. Arbour, whom Albright (2003: 247) describes as 'tenacious', went on to indict Serb leader Slobodan Milošević.

Once she became secretary of state, Albright (2003: 433) worked with other female foreign ministers on issues including trafficking in women and girls. She maintains that none of the matters raised by female diplomats was easy to move forward. According to Albright (2003: 434), 'We had, it seemed, to work doubly hard to be taken seriously, and triply hard to actually push our agendas through.'

Parallel with pro-equality initiatives on women's rights, important changes to sexual orientation policies also unfolded during Democratic presidencies. In 1999, Bill Clinton named the first openly gay US ambassador to a foreign power. Republican opposition to the appointment of James Hormel as envoy to Luxembourg, however, was so intense that the process had to be concluded while members of Congress were away on recess. During the first Obama administration, the Department of State also changed past practices by offering health care, passport, and other services to the same-sex partners of US diplomats (Landler 2009).

KEY POINTS

- In the US and elsewhere, feminist foreign policy directions tend to vary according to the political ideology of the dominant party.
- Since the mid-1980s, Republican presidents have enforced policies that limit foreign aid support for reproductive health programs in other countries.
- Democratic presidents beginning with Bill Clinton have rescinded these policies immediately upon taking office.

- Female foreign policy leaders appointed by Democratic presidents have shown greater willingness to pursue pro-equality initiatives at the international level than their Republican counterparts.
- During the 1990s, Madeleine Albright convened networks of female UN ambassadors and foreign ministers.
- These networks helped to convert awareness of violence against women in the former Yugoslavia into tangible action on that issue.
- Reforms to sexual orientation policies in the State Department have occurred during Democratic presidencies.

The 2016 presidential race

It is difficult to imagine a starker contrast between the foreign policy visions of two presidential candidates than the one US voters confronted in autumn 2016. As the nominee of the Democratic Party, Hillary Rodham Clinton was an experienced world traveller who had visited dozens of countries during her time as first lady, senator from New York, and secretary of state. She spent much of her time doing things other than attending formal receptions and dinners with decision makers. Clinton visited small villages where she learned first-hand about barriers to education, employment, and health care that faced women and girls. Clinton became a strong advocate of micro-credit support for women farmers and entrepreneurs across the global South (see Clinton 2003: 271–85, 388).

Her international profile reached new heights in 1995, when she delivered a powerful speech at the Fourth World Conference of Women in Beijing. Clinton's text made explicit reference to the use of rape as a weapon of war and the plight of women refugees fleeing conflict. The perspectives Clinton offered were seen by some observers as highly contentious, given that they were voiced by a first lady at an international gathering (see Clinton 2003: 303–6).

Speaking in Beijing, Clinton (2003: 305) asserted that 'it is no longer acceptable to discuss women's rights as separate from human rights'. In her view, matters related to the health, education, and legal status of women and girls should be integrated into international agendas so that, in Clinton's (2003: 304) words, 'we may help bring new dignity and respect to women and girls all over the world—and in so doing, bring new strength and stability to families as well'.

Clinton's argument that a lack of opportunity for women and girls held significant consequences became a key pivot of US foreign policy during the first Obama administration. According to Secretary of State Clinton:

> "I believe that the rights of women and girls is the unfinished business of the 21st century ... This is a big deal for American values and for American foreign policy and our interests, but it is also a big deal for our security. Because where women are disempowered and dehumanized, you are more likely to see not just antidemocratic forces, but extremism that leads to security challenges for us."

(Clinton, quoted in Lemmon 2011)

The approach known in 2009 and following as the Hillary Doctrine thus identified the rights of women and girls as foundational to not only world politics but also US national security (see Controversies 20.1). By maintaining that 'the subjugation of women is a direct threat to the security of the United States', Clinton (quoted in Hudson and Leidl 2015: 35) helped to elevate gender equality to unprecedented prominence on the global stage.

Observers continue to debate the practical impact of the Hillary Doctrine. Although rhetoric and procedures related to women's rights became well entrenched in the State Department during Obama's first term, the implications of those changes for women and girls living in conflict zones were not necessarily advantageous. The US administration, according to critics, continued to pursue a highly militarized foreign policy that was inconsistent with the protection of civilians. Moreover, it failed to press for effective policies on violence against women in its dealings with allies in the Arab Middle East and Afghanistan. As Rubin (2012) argues, 'The simple fact is that under Clinton's watch—and largely because of her policies and silence—women in the Islamic world have suffered their worst setbacks in generations.'

As secretary of state, Clinton maintained that she could promote change via channels other than the traditional centres of power. She visited women in South Africa who had established their own housing cooperative, for instance. Clinton also focused on

CONTROVERSIES 20.1: DID THE HILLARY DOCTRINE ENSURE WOMEN'S RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS WOULD DRIVE FOREIGN POLICY DECISION MAKING?

It was no coincidence that the places where women's lives were most undervalued largely lined up with the parts of the world most plagued by instability, conflict, extremism, and poverty. This was a point lost on many of the men working across Washington's foreign policy establishment, but over the years I came to view it as one of the most compelling arguments for why standing up for women and girls was not just the right thing to do but also smart and strategic … the correlation was undeniable, and a growing body of research showed that improving conditions for women helped resolve conflicts and stabilize societies. 'Women's issues' had long been relegated to the margins of US foreign policy and international diplomacy, considered at best a nice thing to work on but hardly a necessity. I became convinced that, in fact, this was a cause that cut to the heart of our national security.

(Clinton 2014: 562)

A shameful US tradition is developing, one of leaving women no better off (Afghanistan)—or even much worse off (Iraq) —than before US troops intervened … On the basis of the US track record, it is hardly surprising that women worldwide no longer have any faith that US intervention will improve their security. The Obama White House indeed fumbled the ball for women: it was dropped as if it were a 'pet rock' instead.

(Hudson and Leidl 2015: 266)

recruiting more women as US diplomats, to the point that over half of new foreign service recruits in the first Obama term were female, as were about one-third of chiefs of mission overseas (Hudson and Leidl 2015: 57). Other countries saw the advantage of sending a woman ambassador to Washington. Within a year of Clinton's swearing in as secretary of state, the US capital had become home to 25 women emissaries, including from Bahrain, Burundi, and Mozambique. Female envoys in Washington were roughly five times as numerous in 2010 as in the late 1990s (Jordan 2010).

By way of contrast, the exposure of Republican nominee Donald Trump to the world outside the US came primarily as a property developer and investor in international beauty pageants. His campaign statements in 2016 were marked by an emphasis on curtailing immigration, disrupting relations with American allies—notably by insisting Mexico would pay for a border wall—and promising to renegotiate trade agreements. Trump remained silent on such matters as the lives of women and girls in the global South.

During the campaign, Trump came under intense criticism for his treatment of Clinton and for taped comments suggesting his attitudes toward women in general were sexist if not predatory. Leading members of the Republican foreign policy establishment questioned Trump's suitability for the position of president. For example, former secretary of state Condoleezza Rice posted a Facebook comment to the effect that Trump should withdraw from the race because he lacked 'the dignity and stature to run for the highest office in the greatest democracy on earth' (Rice, quoted in Nelson 2016). Trump's track record raised the possibility that the steady growth in numbers of women in top diplomatic jobs at the State Department that had unfolded since the 1980s, as summarized in Table 20.1, might plateau or decline after January 2017.

Moreover, Trump voiced strong opposition to reproductive choice during the last of three presidential debates, held on 19 October 2016. In response to a question concerning Roe v. Wade, the 1973 US Supreme Court decision that upheld a woman's right to choose, Trump said he was pro-life and planned to appoint judges who would overturn the ruling (see Blake 2016). These remarks suggested that Trump would reinstate and vigorously enforce the Mexico City Policy that has featured in every Republican administration since the mid-1980s (see Major debates and their impact 20.1).

With respect to sexual orientation rights, Trump's nomination of Rex Tillerson as secretary of state might help to protect reforms introduced during Democratic presidencies. As a member of the Boy Scouts of America board, Tillerson successfully pressed the organization to reverse a policy that prohibited gay youth from becoming scouts. Compared with others named to the Trump team in late 2016, according to Michaelson (2016), Tillerson ranked as 'the least anti-gay of any of Trump's cabinet nominees'.

KEY POINTS

- As presidential candidates in 2016, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton held vastly divergent backgrounds and views concerning international affairs.
- Clinton's track record included support for improved health, education, and employment opportunities for women and girls in the global South.
- Analysts continue to debate the practical effects of the Hillary Doctrine.
- Trump's experience was primarily as a real estate developer and owner of beauty pageants.
- President Trump appeared likely to revive and enforce the Mexico City Policy.
- Secretary of State Rex Tillerson may protect sexual orientation reforms introduced by Democratic administrations.

Conclusions

Competing views of gender colour not only the annals of Western diplomatic history but also contemporary debates about foreign policy. Older conventions shaped formal rules as well as informal norms that determined who could ascend the ladder of success in the State Department. Since 1980, social movement and, conversely, counter-movement claims concerning women's equality and sexual orientation rights have marked periods of Democratic versus Republican ascendance. These patterns of contestation have directly shaped the international relations practices and policy positions of the United States. Progressive reforms that would translate feminist movement positions into foreign policies remain highly contentious, as reflected in the contrasting approaches of presidents from the two major parties to the Mexico City Policy. As is the case with pro-equality positions, changes that liberalize the treatment of sexual orientation minorities have been more closely associated with Democratic than Republican administrations.

Arguably the most significant question for future research concerns how Donald Trump, as an outsider candidate for the Republican presidential nomination in 2016, will shape US foreign policy. Is Trump likely to slow the numerical gains that women have made in diplomatic leadership positions? Will his administration, like that of previous Republican presidents, accede to social conservative views concerning women's rights as well as sexual diversity politics on the international stage? How much opposition from domestic as well as global interests will be directed toward these dimensions of a Trump foreign policy? To what extent can administration critics advance or at least protect their issue agendas? Will they develop compelling alternative visions of global politics?

Taken as a group, responses to each of these points will provide a clear barometric reading of where gender considerations stand in US foreign policy of the second decade of the twenty-first century.

QUESTIONS

1. How do ideas of a public/private dichotomy shape contemporary foreign policy debates? For example, are women's abilities as international leaders assessed differently than those of men?
2. What organizational rules and practices have limited opportunities for female diplomats? To what extent did early reforms make a meaningful difference?
3. How did diplomats challenge discriminatory practices by the State Department? Were interventions by Alison Palmer and others effective?
4. Did rising numbers of women in diplomatic positions of responsibility translate into substantive changes in US foreign policy?
5. In what ways have women's rights considerations figured in the foreign policies of Republican versus Democratic administrations since the 1980s?
6. How have American domestic political interests shaped the reproductive health dimension of US foreign policy?
7. Did attempts by Madeleine Albright and others to stop violence against women in the Balkans during the 1990s measurably advance American national interests?
8. What do the track records of Donald Trump and his senior appointees predict about possible future directions of US foreign policy?

FURTHER READING

Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. (eds) (2017), *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation* (London: Palgrave).

This path-breaking collection addresses women's contributions to diplomacy and peace-building across a variety of states and regions.

Bob, C. (2012), *The Global Right Wing and the Clash of World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

This volume is among the first to consider the spillover to foreign policy from US domestic conflicts over women's rights and LGBTQ rights.

Enloe, C. (1989), *Bananas, Beaches & Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press).

Enloe's classic book presents the foundations of feminist international relations.

Hudson, V. M. and Leidl, P. (2015), *The Hillary Doctrine: Sex and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press).

This book offers the first systematic account of efforts to integrate a women's rights agenda into US foreign policy.

McGlen, N. E. and Sarkees, M. R. (1993), *Women in Foreign Policy: The Insiders* (New York: Routledge).

This significant volume offers an in-depth comparison of the views of women and men who worked for the State Department and the Pentagon.

Sluga, G. and James, C. (eds) (2016), *Women, Diplomacy and International Politics since 1500* (London: Routledge).

This pioneering volume in feminist diplomatic history offers valuable insights for political scientists.

Tickner, J. A. (2001), *Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Columbia University Press).

This important text delineates the main intellectual concerns of feminist international relations.

ENDNOTES

1. According to Nash (2016: 232), Willis did not marry because 'she enjoyed her career too much'.
2. Stephanie Smith Kinney, Policy Coordination Team, Office of the Director General, 1976–9, as quoted in 'The Palmer Case' (2015).

You can find a range of online resources to support your learning at www.oup.com/uk/cox_stokes3e/.

21

Global environment

Robyn Eckersley

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Introduction

This chapter critically explores the evolution of US foreign policy on environmental issues over four-and-a-half decades, from the Nixon administration to the Obama administration, with a brief examination of prospects under the new Trump administration. It shows that while the USA was widely regarded as an environmental leader during the Cold War period, it has more often than not been an environmental laggard in the post–Cold War period. The Obama administration's re-engagement in climate diplomacy stands out as a significant exception but its efforts have been rapidly wound back by the Trump administration. The larger trend of waning environmental leadership from the US has occurred at the same time as international environmental problems, most notably climate change, have increasingly moved from the periphery towards the centre of international politics. This trend is attributed to the more challenging character of the new generation of global environmental problems that emerged in the late 1980s (particularly climate change); increasing domestic political polarization on environmental issues, exacerbated by an organized campaign by conservative think tanks; general concerns over economic competition with rising powers in the global South; and a general political failure to recalibrate US grand strategy in the light of the increasing threats of catastrophic global environmental risks, despite increasing engagement with energy and climate security by the US military.

During most of the period of the Cold War, the environment was widely regarded as a matter of 'low politics' for state foreign policy makers as well as international relations scholars (Smith 1993). However, this began to shift in the late 1980s with the increasing prominence of transboundary and global environmental problems, the proliferation of domestic and

transnational environmental non-government organizations (NGOs), and the publication of *Our Common Future* by the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Report) (WCED 1987). These developments helped generate the momentum for the spectacular 1992 Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro—the largest ever gathering of heads of state at the time. The emergence of local and transnational environmental networks behind the Iron Curtain had played a role in the transformations that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union, while the leader of the world's emerging sole superpower, US President George H. W. Bush, declared himself 'the environmental president' when he came to office in 1989. Yet despite the unprecedented rise in international environmental concern in the 1980s, the environment proved not to be a central foreign policy priority for George H. W. Bush, or indeed any previous or subsequent US president (as distinct from vice-president, such as Al Gore) until the Obama administration. Indeed, the neo-liberal 'New World Order' that Bush championed after the demise of the Soviet Union has become less, rather than more, hospitable to environmental concerns.

Since the turn of the millennium, however, both foreign policy makers and international relations scholars are increasingly recognizing that environmental problems can no longer be quarantined from, or relegated as secondary to, security and economic concerns. Growing rates of species extinction, land degradation, deforestation, natural resource depletion, pollution, and, above all, the multiple risks to life-support systems and human communities from human-induced climate change are now being reframed as sources of potentially catastrophic risk that pose major threats to human health, economic stability, and physical security while also challenging traditional strategies of territorial defence. In the wake of five, increasingly serious, assessment reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the problem of climate change has gradually moved from the periphery towards the centre stage of international politics and foreign policy concerns. The much publicized *Stern Review on the Economic Costs of Climate Change* (Stern 2007), released in October 2006, argued that the short-term economic costs of mitigating global warming are minuscule when set against the longer-term economic costs of failing to take action. In April 2007, the UN Security Council held its first meeting to discuss the international security implications of climate change, and many national security strategies now incorporate a discussion of and response to climate change as a security risk.

This chapter provides a historical review and critical evaluation of the USA's shifting response to international environmental problems. It begins with the administration of President Richard Nixon, which is the period when international environmental problems first rose to international prominence, and tracks the USA's engagement with major international environmental summits and environmental treaties up to and including the end of the Obama administration (to the end of 2016). It is shown that the USA was regarded as a leader in both domestic and foreign environmental policy making in the 1970s and to some extent in the 1980s, but by 1992 it had lost this international leadership mantle and by the mid-2000s it was widely regarded as a laggard. The Obama administration reversed this trend but the new Trump administration has quickly and spectacularly reinstated it.

The two questions raised by this history are: what explains the overall trend of declining leadership since the end of the Cold War at a time when global and transboundary environmental problems have become more rather than less serious and threatening to both the US and global security? And why did the USA's environmental leadership under the Obama administration emerge as an exception to this trend? In order to address these questions, the chapter locates the evolution of US foreign environmental policy in the context of the evolution of domestic environmental politics and policy, on the one hand, and the evolution of environmental multilateralism and US grand strategy, on the other hand. It is argued that both of these developments have shaped US foreign environmental policy making. Finally, the chapter offers a brief critical analysis of theories of foreign policy making and argues that constructivist approaches to foreign policy analysis have the capacity to provide more nuanced, multi-level accounts of the US's environmental diplomacy than standard realist, Marxist, and rationalist accounts, including two-level game theory.

Environmental multilateralism and the USA

The late 1960s are typically singled out as the time of birth of the modern environmental movement as a widespread and persistent social movement. The long

period of economic boom and population growth following the end of the Second World War produced a range of mass-produced goods but also a mass of ubiquitous ecological problems, with growing transboundary implications. Although most political leaders rejected the doomsday scenarios generated by the limits-to-growth advocates of the early 1970s, a steady stream of studies of global environmental trends has continued to underscore the increasing gravity of the global ecological crisis, culminating in the biggest global environmental challenge of all—human-induced climate change.[1] In response to these broad developments, the post–Second World War period also witnessed a spectacular increase in environmental lawmaking at the national and international levels. Yet the rise in environmental multilateralism, punctuated by four major earth summits—in Stockholm in 1972, Rio de Janeiro in 1992, Johannesburg in 2002 and again Rio de Janeiro in 2012 (known as 'Rio plus twenty')—has also brought into relief a range of major tensions between developed and developing countries over environment and development priorities, the meaning of sustainable development, environmental justice, environmental and human security, and the allocation of burden-sharing responsibilities. Throughout this period, the world has looked to the USA for environmental leadership as the world's richest country, with the largest cumulative and per capita ecological footprint and the greatest economic and technological capability to respond (Bukovansky et al. 2012). However, whereas the US Congress was the major force for environmental leadership in the 1970s, since the early 1990s Congress has acted as a major restraint on attempts by the US executive to play a leadership role.

From environmental leader to laggard

In the early 1970s, the USA stood out as a world leader in domestic environmental law and policy (much of which has since been emulated by other states), and under the presidency of Richard Nixon the USA pursued a relatively proactive role at the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. Indeed, Nixon (along with his predecessor Lyndon Johnson) has received the strongest rating in a survey of the environmental records of the ten presidents from Truman to Clinton (Soden and Steel 1999: 347–9). Yet Soden and Steel (1999: 347–8) suggest that these presidents were 'merely caught in the tide of congressional efforts, public support, and environmental realities that demanded a federal response to a growing number of programs'. They conclude that the credit for US domestic and international environmental leadership in the 1970s must go to the environmental movement (which generated a major momentum for environmental concern in American society), to their lobbyists, and to Congress, which displayed mostly bipartisan support for environmental initiatives during this period.

As the following brief history shows, although the US president is chief diplomat and chief executive officer, US foreign environmental policy decisions have been largely shaped by domestic environmental politics, and the president is merely one, albeit one very significant, player in a complicated set of political processes in the deeply fragmented US political system. Writing before the Obama administration, Soden and Steel (1999: 349) argued that there had never been a substantial 'environmental president' but there have certainly been some substantial and unapologetic anti-environmental presidents, most notably Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush, and we can now add Donald Trump as leader of this list. However, as we shall see, President Obama exploited the full capacity of his constitutional and leadership powers to step around a hostile Congress and prosecute an active diplomatic agenda in climate policy.

The Nixon years: setting the pace

President Richard Nixon was not known for his environmental sympathies, but he nonetheless presided over one of the most innovative periods of environmental policy making and law making in US history, which included the enactment of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in 1969 that established the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) within the White House, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), set up in 1970. The 1960s had seen the spectacular growth of environmental organizations and public environmental awareness in the USA, culminating in the first nationwide 'Earth Day' in 1970. Nixon had assumed office in 1968 on a tide of rising environmental concern, and he signed a range of new environmental treaties relating to fisheries and the protection of Antarctic seals, which was consistent with a history of long-standing US leadership in the protection of marine resources and marine mammals. He also signed a treaty designed to protect the seabed from nuclear testing.

However, it was at the 1972 Stockholm Conference that the USA sought to develop a green international reputation. During the period 1968–72 the Nixon administration was facing a major crisis over its intervention in Vietnam, including international criticism for the 'ecocide' resulting from the use of Agent Orange by the US military, along with international criticism for its atomic testing. The Nixon administration saw Stockholm as a significant opportunity to reassert international moral leadership, gain domestic approval, and divert attention from 'that war'. Preparations for the conference were dominated by the executive, particularly the State Department and the CEQ, with very little involvement by US environment or business organizations. Hopgood attributes this lack of involvement to the relative insulation of the State Department and CEQ from domestic social pressures, and the relative lack of international focus of US environmental organizations at that time (Hopgood 1998: 87). However, Stockholm acted as a major catalyst for the development of both domestic and international environmental NGOs, which have played an increasingly significant role, particularly as watchdogs, in subsequent international environmental negotiations.

The USA's two most prominent initiatives at Stockholm were support for the establishment of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) to coordinate environmental matters within the UN, and a pledge to contribute 40 per cent of a $100 million voluntary fund to support UNEP. The USA also used the occasion to promote the development of a convention on ocean dumping, the establishment of a World Heritage Trust, and a ten-year moratorium on whaling. These were relatively ambitious initiatives when judged by the standards of the day. Yet they also provide a good illustration of the limited scope of environmental policy making at the international level (Hopgood 1998: 79). For example, the USA rejected calls for additional funding to developing countries to assist them with meeting their environmental commitments.

Nixon pursued fewer environmental initiatives in his second term of office, which coincided with the energy crisis of 1973–4 and the Watergate scandal that led to his resignation. Nixon's successor, President Gerald Ford, was largely preoccupied with the political fallout from Watergate (including his pardoning of Nixon) and an economy suffering from stagflation. Although Ford had once worked as a park ranger at Yellowstone National Park, he took very few domestic or international environmental initiatives during his brief tenure, and his international efforts largely involved follow-up work arising from previous administrations. This period saw the signing of the two uncontroversial conventions dealing with ocean pollution, the ratification of the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1974, and the signing of a treaty on the conservation of polar bears (Long, Cabral, and Vandivort 1999: 207).

The Carter years: arrested development

President Jimmy Carter is widely regarded as the first US president to adopt a global environmental perspective, evidenced by his commissioning in May 1977 of the *Global 2000 Report to the President* (Council on Environmental Quality and Department of State 1980), which was released in 1981. Through this report, Carter sought a comprehensive overview of global environmental trends on population, resources, and the environment. Although Carter's international environmental concerns were more sincere than those of Nixon, his international environmental record turned out to be more modest. Confronted with an ongoing energy crisis and an ailing economy at home, and the Iranian hostage crisis abroad, the Carter administration was unable to play any concerted leadership role in addressing the alarming global environmental trends that were revealed in the *Global 2000 Report to the President*. Nonetheless, he began the difficult process of addressing the USA's growing dependence on imported energy with policies that included demand management and the promotion of renewable energy. He introduced the Public Utilities Regulatory Policy Act, which included energy conservation and efficiency measures, appointed a White House Task Force on National Energy Policy, placed the Department of Energy in the presidential cabinet, and introduced a major energy bill (which failed to pass Congress) and a bill establishing a Synthetic Fuels Corporation, which passed Congress (Long, Cabral, and Vandivort 1999: 208). Two further major domestic environmental initiatives were the Superfund Act (later signed off by Reagan), to regulate the clean-up of toxic waste sites, and the protection of vast areas of Alaskan wilderness.

On the international front, in 1979 Carter extended, by executive order, the application of the NEPA to US government activities abroad and in 1981 he banned the export of toxic waste to other countries. He

initiated negotiations with Canada on acid rain and signed the Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution 1979. Shortly before leaving office, he ensured US participation in the World Climate Conference 1979, which contributed to the growing international research effort on climate change. Carter's most significant environmental legacy was his readiness to question America's dependence on imported oil and his efforts to promote energy conservation and a renewable energy industry in America. Yet he also saw Persian Gulf oil as vital to US interests and created a new military command structure in the region, which eventually became the United States Central Command.

The Reagan years: deregulating the environment

Ronald Reagan's first official act in coming to office was to dismantle the solar panels that Carter had had installed on the roof of the White House (Hartmann 2003)—an act that set the environmental tone of his presidency. As the first US president with an explicit anti-environmental agenda, Reagan embarked upon a comprehensive effort to reduce, and where possible eliminate, many of the environmental regulations that had been enacted over the previous decade. Indeed, President Reagan brought an end to what had been a general bipartisan approach to environmental issues in previous decades, at least insofar as they required regulation. His Economic Recovery Act 1981 sought to reduce taxation and wind back spending on social and environmental programmes, including Carter's tax incentives for renewable energy, and to make way for the efficiency of the market. Reagan also devolved environmental responsibilities to the states and local governments, and screened all senior appointments to environmental agencies to ensure their conformity with his anti-environmental agenda (Vig 2006: 105). Although his attempt to abolish the CEQ failed to gain congressional approval, he succeeded in sidelining the agency by cutting its staff and ignoring its advice (Vig 2006: 105). Reagan's budget cuts also made it impossible for federal environmental agencies, such as the EPA and the Department of the Interior, to implement their mandates. However, Reagan's anti-environmental campaign slowed down considerably in his second term in response to growing public opposition, and his efforts to demonize environmentalists provoked a surge in the funding and membership of US environmental organizations (Dryzek et al. 2003: 34).

Although Reagan's anti-environmental agenda was mainly directed towards US domestic policy, he also made it clear that he would not sign any international environmental treaties that would compromise US economic competitiveness (Long, Cabral, and Vandivort 1999: 211). Reagan reversed Carter's 1981 executive order banning the export of toxic waste, declined to sign the 1989 Basel Convention which regulated the transboundary movement of hazardous waste, and stalled the acid rain negotiations with Canada. His administration rejected the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III), arguing that the USA should not be made to share its technological capabilities regarding seabed mining and offshore fishing with other nations. Reagan also ceased funding US population projects and withdrew from UNESCO, although his attempt to end US contributions to UNEP was successfully resisted by Congress (Hopgood 1998: 125–6). However, Reagan did support several international environmental initiatives, such as the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources 1982 and the International Tropical Timber Agreement 1985.

It is no small irony that the most significant foreign environmental policy development that occurred during Reagan's second term—US ozone diplomacy—also stands out as the most significant example of US environmental leadership and multilateral engagement in the twentieth century. Scientists had discovered the link between the release of chlorofluorcarbons (CFCs) and the thinning of the earth's ozone layer in the early 1970s, and the USA had phased out non-essential CFC aerosols as early as 1978 under its Clean Air Act. The USA also played a leading role in pushing for a complete phasing out of ozone-depleting substances—compared to the weaker proposal for a 30 per cent cut proposed by the European Union (EU)—in the negotiations leading to the 1985 Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer. The discovery of the so-called Antarctic ozone hole in 1985 had prompted a concerted push for a phase-out by the US EPA. Moreover, in response to EU resistance, the US State Department mounted a major international consensus-building campaign to persuade other countries to agree to a worldwide phase-out of ozone-depleting substances, including ongoing periodic assessment of the list of ozone-depleting substances (Sitaraman 2001: 123–4). This campaign required all US embassies to explain the US negotiating position, beginning with

like-minded countries and then extending to reluctant countries (Benedick 1991: 55–67). Domestically, the State Department worked closely with all branches of the US government, the major environmental and science agencies, and the CFC producers.

Although US CFC producers initially formed a united front against EPA regulatory proposals for a unilateral phase-out, they shifted their stance to support the international harmonization of regulations following the signing of the Vienna Convention in 1985 (which supported the principle of protecting the ozone layer, but without specific commitments). Key producers such as DuPont and Allied Chemical had invested in new production facilities for CFC substitutes and the US negotiators supported the industry's commercial interests in the negotiations for the Montreal Protocol 1987, which introduced a mandatory phase-out regime (DeSombre 2000: 93–4; Bang et al. 2007). The establishment of a multilateral fund has assisted developing countries with the financial and technical resources required to meet the costs of compliance with the regime.

Many analysts of US ozone diplomacy have argued that the USA's international leadership role can be understood as an attempt by the USA to 'internationalize' its domestic environmental regulation. According to Elizabeth DeSombre (2000) this situation arises when there is a set of domestic environmental regulations in place and an agreement between US environmentalists and US industry that international regulation would be both environmentally and economically advantageous. On this analysis, the Reagan administration's ozone diplomacy is consistent with its position that it would not support any international environmental treaty that would compromise US economic competitiveness.

Bush the elder: the failed 'environmental president'

In the wake of public criticism of Reagan's anti-environmentalism, the resurgence of the US environment movement during the 1980s, and growing international concern over global warming, George H. W. Bush chose to badge himself 'the environmental president' in the 1988 presidential race. Once elected, Bush surprised his critics by appointing key environmental advocates to head the EPA and CEQ, and he supported the further strengthening of the Clean Air Act in 1991, which included more stringent reductions in sulphur dioxide emissions. These amendments also pioneered the system of tradable pollution permits in sulphur dioxide and prepared the ground for the negotiation of an acid rain treaty with Canada in 1994 to reduce sulphur dioxide emissions by 50 per cent by 1994. Bush also agreed to amendments strengthening the ozone treaty in 1992.

Yet despite these early initiatives, and the significant opportunity for environmental leadership presented by the 1992 Earth Summit, Bush failed to live up to his promise to be America's environmental president. Having served for eight years as Reagan's vice-president, which included actively supporting his campaign of environmental deregulation, Bush played a conservative role in negotiations over the two biggest international environmental challenges: climate change and biodiversity protection. Indeed, President Bush negotiated his presence at the 1992 Earth Summit on the condition that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) would not include specific targets or timetables for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions, arguing that this would place an intolerable burden on the US economy. Nonetheless, in signing the UNFCCC, the US committed to the core burden-sharing principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) and respective capabilities under the UNFCCC, which called on developed countries to lead in mitigation on the basis of their greater responsibility for emissions and their greater capacity to pursue mitigation, and to assist developing countries to mitigate and adapt to climate change. However, the Bush administration declined to sign the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), bowing to pressure from the US biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries, which argued that the provision requiring royalties to be paid to developing countries for the use of their native genetic diversity did not provide adequate patent and copyright protection for US industry. President Bush also attracted international condemnation for his oft-quoted declaration at the summit that 'America's lifestyle is not up for negotiation'.

In the last eighteen months of office, President Bush returned to the work he had performed as vice-president by installing Vice-President Dan Quayle as head of the Council on Competitiveness to respond to industry complaints of excessive regulation, including environmental regulation (Vig 2006: 107).

The Clinton years: unfulfilled promises

Bush's failure as an environmental president served as a key target in Bill Clinton's presidential campaign

in 1992. Clinton and his environmentally committed vice-president, Al Gore, received strong endorsement from the US environment movement, and their Democratic campaign included a wide range of environmental promises, including signing the CBD, committing to quantitative targets to reduce US CO_2 emissions (i.e. to return to 1990 emissions levels by 2000), raising the corporate average fuel economy standard for motor vehicles, and promoting renewable energy research and development (Paarlberg 1999; Vig 2006: 108). The Clinton–Gore team also emphasized the economic advantages that would flow from an increased investment in more environmentally friendly technologies as an antidote to the traditional discourse of 'environment versus the economy' that had characterized the Reagan and Bush administrations. On winning office, Clinton abolished the Council on Competitiveness, appointed well-known environmental professionals to key executive positions, and established an Office for Environmental Policy to ensure the integration of environmental policies in all departments (Vig 2006: 108). This push for integration also extended to foreign policy. Vice-President Al Gore was a key climate advocate and supporter of enlarging the USA's security framework to include environmental concerns (see Key quotes 21.1). Secretary of State Warren Christopher announced in 1997 that the Clinton administration would 'put environmental issues where they belong: in the mainstream of American foreign policy' (Christopher 1998: 412). Indeed, Long, Cabral, and Vandivort (1999: 218) assert that Clinton had 'assembled one of the most environmentally friendly (greenest) administrations in American history'.

KEY QUOTES 21.1: LETTER FROM VICE-PRESIDENT AL GORE

We have moved beyond Cold War definitions of the United States' strategic interests. Our foreign policy must now address a broad range of threats including damage to the world's environment—that transcend countries and continents and require international cooperation to solve.

Environmental problems such as global climate change, ozone depletion, ocean and air pollution, and resource degradation—compounded by an expanding world population—respect no border and threaten the health, prosperity, and jobs of all Americans. All the missiles and artillery in our arsenal will not be able to protect our people from rising sea levels, poisoned air, or foods laced with pesticides. Our efforts to promote democracy, free trade, and stability in the world will fall short unless people have a livable environment.

(Letter from Vice-President Albert Gore Jr. attached to US Department of State 1998)

Despite this initial enthusiasm, the Clinton administration faced significant obstacles in promoting a new environmental agenda. The 1992 presidential race had taken place in the context of a declining economy, declining public interest in environmental issues, and falling funding and membership of environmental organizations. Even before the 1994 congressional elections, which gave control of both houses to the Republicans, Clinton suffered a major congressional defeat over his proposal to introduce a broad-based tax on fuels, which was his major domestic initiative for fulfilling his commitment to reduce US CO_2 emissions to 1990 levels by 2000. The initiative was eventually replaced with a much more modest tax on gasoline. Moreover, Clinton's Climate Change Action Plan, which relied on voluntary measures, bore little relationship to his initial climate pledge.

Although Clinton signed the CBD in 1993 (subject to certain reservations), he failed to secure ratification in the Senate, despite gaining the approval of representatives from the US biotechnology and pharmaceuticals industry based on the reservations (negotiated as side agreements with industry) (Paarlberg 1999: 239). A similar fate befell the USA's signing of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. Prior to the negotiations at Kyoto, the Republican-dominated Senate—sensitive to the economic concerns of fossil-fuel producing states in the USA—had unanimously passed the Byrd–Hagel resolution making any support by the Senate dependent on two conditions: that the Protocol would not harm the US economy, and that developing states must undertake commitments in the same time period as developed countries. This was followed by a $13 million advertising campaign by the US fossil fuel industry in the lead-up to the Kyoto meeting that warned Americans of the economic costs of implementing the Protocol (Oberthur and Ott 1999: 72). The US delegates at Kyoto were initially constrained by a limited

negotiating mandate that reflected these concerns: to accept only a stabilization rather than reduction of emissions targets, and only if developing countries also accepted emissions reduction targets in the same time period. However, last-minute intervention by Al Gore to break a major deadlock in the negotiations resulted in the USA agreeing to cut emissions by 7 per cent by 2008–12 from 1990 levels without developing country participation. Although this diplomatic shift by the USA was hailed as a major breakthrough in the international climate negotiations, it was clear that the Clinton–Gore administration would be unable to win Senate ratification. Indeed, Clinton avoided such a confrontation with the Senate by not submitting the Protocol for approval, despite the fact that the USA had successfully negotiated a range of so-called flexibility mechanisms under the Kyoto Protocol (such as carbon trading, joint implementation, and the clean development mechanism) that would make it easier for the USA to reach its target.

In the negotiations for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety 2000, under the CBD, the USA led the so-called Miami group of nations that opposed trade restrictions on the transboundary movement of genetically modified organisms. Moreover, Clinton's negotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement with Canada and Mexico attracted strong criticism from US environmental organizations for setting off a 'race to the bottom' in environmental regulation and enforcement, which he sought to allay through the inclusion of new environmental and labour side agreements. A concerted campaign by US environmental organizations against the environmental limitations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade also prompted the USA to play a role in ensuring the inclusion of the objectives of sustainable development and environmental protection in the 1994 Marrakesh Agreement establishing the World Trade Organization.

In the end, the Clinton administration failed to make any significant progress on climate change, failed to secure the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol or CBD, and declined to sign the Cartagena Biosafety Protocol. This may be attributed largely to a well-organized industry opposition and a hostile Congress, which gave considerable airing to the views of global-warming sceptics (McCright and Dunlap 2003: 361). Clinton also displayed a pragmatic disposition, which included a readiness to compromise environmental goals, and an overriding concern to maintain the competitiveness of the US economy. Nonetheless, the Clinton administration did seek to grapple with the challenge of policy integration by promoting the discourses of ecological modernization and introducing environmental security as a component of US foreign policy and defence planning (The White House 1996).

G. W. Bush: the fossil fuel president

The election of George W. Bush to the presidency in 2001 following his narrow victory over Al Gore in the 2000 presidential race saw the return of a strong pro-business agenda and a corresponding roll-back and revision of many domestic environmental regulations that was reminiscent of the Reagan years (Vig 2006: 115–17). However, whereas the Reagan administration had led the world in the negotiations to protect the ozone layer, the Bush administration attracted widespread international criticism for its repudiation of the Kyoto Protocol in 2001, echoing the concerns of the Byrd-Hagel resolution (despite the fact that US public opinion was in favour of ratification in early 2001).[2] Yet notwithstanding the Bush administration's scepticism about climate science, the USA has continued to play a major role in climate change research.

The Bush administration rejected prescriptive domestic legislation such as mandatory emissions reductions targets, a price on carbon, or mandatory renewable energy targets. Instead, through its Climate Change initiative, it sought to reduce the GHG emissions intensity of the US economy by 18 per cent by 2012, largely through voluntary measures and technology development (The White House 2002). GHG intensity refers to the amount of GHG produced per unit of GDP, so GHG intensity can fall while aggregate emissions continue to rise (albeit at a slower rate). By the Bush administration's own admission, the GHG intensity of the US economy has been in long-term decline and the 18 per cent target was only slightly above forecasts based on a business-as-usual scenario (Depledge 2005: 23).

More significantly, the Bush administration's climate change strategy was overshadowed by its National Energy Strategy, based on recommendations from an Energy Task Force chaired by Vice-President Dick Cheney. Drafted in secrecy by representatives from the fossil fuel and related industries, the Energy Task Force (concluded in May 2001) sought to step up the supply

of energy (primarily, but not exclusively, fossil fuels) rather than reduce demand. Many of the report's recommendations were incorporated into the Energy Policy Act, which passed Congress in 2005. The Act provided larger subsidies to the oil and gas industries to encourage exploration and drilling, the streamlining of environmental regulations to accelerate increased energy production, the opening up of the Alaskan National Wildlife Refuge to exploration and drilling, and low-interest loans and research grants for the development of nuclear power plants (The White House 2006). Although President Bush acknowledged America's vulnerability arising from its addiction to oil in his 2006 and 2007 State of the Union Addresses (Bush 2006, 2007) his response was primarily technology-driven and concerned to secure supply and keep energy costs low rather than reduce demand.

Vice-President Cheney's energy strategy proved to be the single most important initiative shaping the Bush administration's domestic and international climate change policy. This was in part a response to the fact that USA's dependence on externally sourced oil rose to 56 per cent in 2006, almost half of which came from the Middle East. Although the Bush administration denied that oil was a motivation behind the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, gaining access to Iraq's oil fields for foreign multinationals has nonetheless emerged as the only significant pay-off from the war, but it has come at the price of fanning anti-Americanism and Islamic fundamentalism.

The Bush administration's foreign climate policy agenda sought to undermine the Kyoto Protocol by developing 'environmental coalitions of the willing', in the form of voluntary partnerships for clean technology development that cut across the developed/developing country divide. The most significant of these partnerships is the Asia Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate 2006 between the USA, Australia, Japan, China, South Korea, India, and later Canada, which provided a non-binding framework for cooperation to promote the diffusion of new 'clean' technologies (Christoff and Eckersley 2007). Now defunct, the partnership was based on market-friendly procedural norms of equality of commercial opportunity rather than the UNFCCC's principles of CBDR (McGee and Taplin 2006: 188).

The Bush administration also turned its back on other environmental agreements and follow-up work arising from the 1992 Earth Summit. It declined to press for ratification of the CBD and declined to sign or ratify the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety 2000. President Bush also declined to attend the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, and the US delegation that was present strongly resisted efforts to agree on an international renewable energy target.

While the USA remained the largest financial contributor to the IPCC and UNFCCC during this period, it rejected a precautionary approach on climate change and biosafety. This stood in stark contrast to its aggressive policy of precaution and pre-emption in addressing terrorist threats, including military intervention in the territories of states that harbour terrorists. In all, the Bush administration's foreign policy was overwhelmingly preoccupied with the war on terror and weapons of mass destruction rather than climate change and the growing risks of 'weather of mass destruction'.

Obama: improvising around domestic and international deadlock

The election of Barack Obama marked an important shift in domestic environmental and energy policy and international climate diplomacy. The Obama administration declared climate change to be one of its key priorities and it made significant budget allocations for the advancement of renewable energy, and the inclusion of clean energy provisions and environmental infrastructure expenditure in the so-called green economic stimulus package in response to the financial crisis (The White House 2011). Whereas President Bush had effectively rejected the climate regime's burden-sharing principles of CBDR and US climate leadership, President Obama sought to respond to international expectations of US leadership by accepting and re-interpreting CBDR in ways that would accommodate domestic political concerns and pressures, on the one hand, and the US's position vis-à-vis rising powers in the developing world, on the other. Obama and his Secretary of State, John Kerry, repeatedly drew attention to the new 'post-Kyoto environment' and China's and India's rapid emissions growth trajectory as a reason to reject the rigid binary between industrialized and developing countries in the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol and to recalibrate differentiated responsibilities to include contemporaneous commitments from the major emerging emitters in the developing world (Obama 2009).

On the domestic front, President Obama initially hoped that Congress would enact national cap-and-trade

legislation to reduce US emissions. Although one bill managed to pass the House of Representatives on 26 June 2009 (the Waxman–Markey bill [HR 254] by 219 votes for, 212 against), the Democratic leadership in the Senate abandoned its efforts to push the bill through the Senate in July 2010 due to lack of support.

However, Obama's first climate diplomatic test came before this legislative defeat. The fifteenth conference of the parties (COP15) to the UNFCCC was held in Copenhagen in December 2009, where it was hoped that a new treaty would be negotiated that included all major emitters (many of which had no emissions reduction obligations, including the USA and China). However, the negotiations threatened to collapse due to deep disagreements. China and India argued that developing countries should not be required to undertake legally binding (as distinct from voluntary and nationally appropriate) emissions measures in accordance with CBDR, while the US (negotiating under the continuing shadow of the Senate's Byrd-Hagel resolution, and in the hope that the Waxman-Markey bill might pass the Senate) insisted on symmetry of legal (as distinct from substantive) commitment. In the chaos of the endgame negotiations, the US met with Brazil, South Africa, India, and China and forged the outlines of the non-binding Copenhagen Accord 2009, which provided a 'bottom-up', voluntary 'pledge and review' model of emissions reduction. Although the accord was not adopted at Copenhagen due to refusal by some parties to accept such a minilateral deal that departed from due process, it was endorsed a year later at the Cancún conference.

The Obama administration pledged to reduce the US's emissions by 17 per cent by 2020 from a 2005 baseline, which would amount to a cut of around 3 to 4 per cent from a 1990 baseline. This pledge was in step with the Waxman-Markey bill, but fell well below the minus 25 to 40 per cent range recommended by the IPCC for developed countries. This stood in stark contrast to the EU's emissions reduction target for 2020, which was to reduce emissions by 20 per cent by 2020 from a 1990 baseline, rising to 30 per cent if other developed countries made comparable commitments.

The heavy Democratic losses in the mid-term Congressional elections in November 2010 gave the Republicans control of the House of Representatives (242–193) and narrowed the Democrats' majority in the Senate to 53. A majority (128 or 53 per cent) of the 242 Republicans in the House of Representatives publicly questioned the science of climate change (Johnson 2010). This conservative swing, which reflected high unemployment following the global financial crisis (GFC) and an aggressive campaign against action on climate change by the Tea Party movement, significantly diminished the prospects of any significant climate or energy bill passing the 112th Congress. Indeed, the Tea Party movement, along with the growth of conservative and anti-environmental think tanks with the specific aim of 'manufacturing uncertainty' around climate science (Jacques et al. 2008), helped to make the denial of human-induced climate change a litmus test of US conservatism and 'true Republicanism'. For the remainder of its period in office, the Republican-controlled Congress provided a 'sturdy legislative wall' against any new climate bills (Dunlop, McCright, and Yarosh 2016: 6).

Obama responded by by using his executive powers under the Clean Air Act to improvise around this wall in order to regulate emissions (see Major debates and their impact 21.1). During the Obama administration's first term, EPA regulations were applied to reduce emissions from cars, light trucks, and, later, new and renovated power plants. During Obama's second term, EPA regulations were extended to all existing power plants under Obama's Clean Power Plan—the centrepiece of his broad Climate Action Plan. Launched in 2013, the plan contained a wide range of domestic and foreign policy strategies, policies, and measures, including ending tax breaks for big oil companies; improving efficiency standards for vehicles, appliances, and equipment; ending public financing for new coal plants overseas under global sector public financing; strengthening climate cooperation with China and India; mobilizing global climate finance for the Green Climate Fund; and seeking a new international climate agreement that was ambitious, inclusive, and flexible (The White House 2013).

The Climate Action Plan represented the most significant domestic climate initiative undertaken by any president, and it was produced in the second year of the four-year negotiations that led to the Paris Agreement of 2015. In 2011, the parties to the UNFCCC had adopted a new negotiating roadmap to produce a new and durable international treaty that would be 'applicable to all' for the post-2020 period. At the time the future of the Kyoto Protocol, which was due to expire in 2012, was uncertain and there was no successor treaty in sight, and the Copenhagen Accord pledges only ran to 2020. The new treaty, called the Paris

MAJOR DEBATES AND THEIR IMPACT 21.1: THE EPA'S AUTHORITY TO REGULATE GHG EMISSIONS

In the landmark case of *Massachusetts et al. v. Environmental Protection Agency et al.*, 548 US (Supreme Court of the United States 2007), the US Supreme Court ruled by a majority of five to four that the EPA had the authority and the obligation to regulate CO_2 emissions as pollutants under the Clean Air Act if it found that such emissions endangered public health and welfare. The ruling overturned a decision of the US Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia Circuit in September 2005.

The Bush administration declined to act on this decision but the Obama administration seized the opportunity to regulate CO_2 emissions as a pollutant following the failure of Congress to support cap-and-trade legislation. Following the EPA's 'endangerment finding' in December 2009, the administration used the president's executive power to promulgate new regulations to reduce emissions from cars and light trucks, and later for regulation of new power plants and major modifications to existing power plants. In Obama's second term, the same executive powers were used to produce the centrepiece of the Obama administration's Climate Action Plan, the Clean Power Plan. Officially launched in June 2013, the plan extended the EPA's authority to regulate emissions to all existing power plants, with the aim of reducing emissions from this sector by 32 per cent from 2005 levels by 2030. However, the plan left it to each state to decide how best to achieve its allocated target.

In 1970, in the heyday of US environmentalism, Congress saw fit to confer considerable discretion on the EPA to identify and regulate pollutants. There have since been various unsuccessful attempts in Congress to constrain the EPA's regulatory power, and a major legal action was launched against both sets of EPA regulations produced by the Obama administration, which saw a suspension of the operation of the Clean Power Plan by the US Supreme Court in February 2016. However, while these regulations have proved invulnerable to amendment thus far, it is an easy matter for a new presidential administration to rescind the regulations by executive order.

Agreement, was adopted in 2015, and represented an historic breakthrough in the international climate negotiations. The Paris Agreement is a hybrid approach that builds a strengthened version of the pledge and review approach of the Copenhagen Accord into a legally binding treaty that includes long-term goals, tougher temperature targets, the provision of climate finance and other support to developing countries, and provisions for a dynamic ratcheting up of mitigation ambition by all parties through regular cycles of review.

Although a wide range of parties, and particularly the French presidency, can be credited for the success of the negotiations leading to Paris, the Obama administration's active re-engagement in the process proved to be pivotal in breaking the historical deadlock between the US and China over CBDR. First, the administration's active bilateral diplomacy with China paid off. The US–China Joint Announcement on Climate Change in November 2014, which announced the parties' respective commitment to national action, bilateral cooperation on climate change, and commitment to a new treaty, injected considerable momentum into the negotiations. The US promised to reduce US emissions by 26 to 28 per cent by 2025 from 2005 levels, while China announced that it would seek to achieve 'the peaking of CO_2 emissions around 2030 and to make best efforts to peak early' and that it intended to 'increase the share of non-fossil fuels in primary energy consumption to around 20% by 2030' (The White House 2014). Although China tended to play a defensive role inside the negotiations compared to the US, their cooperation in the closing days of the Paris meeting and their joint ratification of the Paris Agreement at the G-20 meeting in China in September 2016 were crucial in finalizing the agreement and speeding the ratification process.

Second, the US played a major role in shaping the mitigation architecture of the Paris Agreement 2015 in ways that made agreement possible by focusing on breadth of participation and nationally determined commitments in the first instance, and then building ambition over time. Indeed, it is possible to trace a line back from the mitigation provisions in the Paris Agreement to formal submissions to the negotiations made by the US as early as 2013, where the US proposed a hybrid agreement that would be a legal treaty, but with the mitigation provisions determined based on national circumstances and housed outside the agreement in a register rather as legally binding targets (United States 2013a and b). The US proposals survived the negotiations because they provided a path that enabled the parties to step around their deep disagreements. Most notably, it attracted the support of China and India (neither of which would have committed to legally binding obligations), while also making it

possible for the Obama administration to implement its commitments using its executive powers rather than seek Senate ratification (Wirth 2016; Oberthür and Bodle 2016: 45). The Paris negotiations were also a high point in US and EU cooperation, which further contributed to a successful outcome. The Obama administration pledged $3 billion to the Green Climate Fund—the single biggest contribution. A viable fund was crucial to the continued support of developing countries in their pursuit of national mitigation and adaptation.

The speed at which the Paris Agreement was ratified—within one year of the agreement's adoption (compared to eight years for the Kyoto Protocol)—demonstrated a general commitment to maintaining the momentum of the historic agreement. It is no coincidence that agreement came into force on 4 November 2016, only four days before the election of Donald Trump as the new US president. While Obama's improvised domestic climate legacy is likely to unravel, his international climate legacy is likely to endure.

There were few other environmental treaty developments during Obama's two terms. Since the US has maintained its opposition to the Kyoto Protocol 1997 and CBD 1992, it did not become a party to the 2012 Doha amendment to the Kyoto Protocol (which extended the commitment period to 2020) or the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources, which was negotiated under the CBD 1992.

Trump: back in reverse

During his presidential campaign, Donald Trump—a climate sceptic—vowed to tear up the Paris Agreement along with the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan. As president, he gave the green light to aggressive fossil fuel exploitation in the US, including the revival of coal, and assembled a pro-fossil-fuel and anti-environmental cabinet (more super-charged than President Reagan's) to embark on a program of environmental deregulation. With the Republican party controlling both houses, the Trump administration was set to gain the support he needed to pursue his anti-environmental agenda. This agenda was also reflected in the Trump administration's foreign policy, which began with his appointment of Rex Tillerson—the former CEO of ExxonMobil—as the Secretary of State. After some delay and against strong urging from many world leaders as well as from Tillerson, President Trump officially announced in June 2017 that the US would withdraw from the Paris Agreement. However, the Paris Agreement provides that a party must wait three years after the agreement comes into force before giving notice of withdrawal, and then wait another year for withdrawal to come into effect, which effectively covers Trump's first term. How the parties will manage the US's continued presence at the negotiating table during this period remains to be seen.

The world has changed a great deal since 2001, when the Bush administration repudiated the Kyoto Protocol. The parties to the Paris Agreement, including the EU, China, and India, have made it overwhelmingly clear that they will press ahead even if the US withdraws, and China has unexpectedly found itself assuming a new climate leadership role. The US's share of global emissions has declined, renewable energy is now much cheaper, and despite Trump's urgings it is unlikely that coal can be revived in the US. Many US states (led by California), cities, and businesses have declared that they will continue to work towards reducing emissions. There is also strong public support for climate action, and Trump's election has had a galvanizing effect on the environmental and renewal energy movement. Moreover, studies of US public opinion have shown that by the end of 2016, support for the 're-carbonization' of the US economy and the rejection of the Paris Agreement was much more pronounced among conservative Republican elites and did not reflect the views of a majority of voters, including conservative voters (Leiserowitz et al. 2016).

Key trends and puzzles in US foreign environmental policy

Table 21.1 provides a summary of the USA's involvement in the major international environmental treaties negotiated since the 1970s (excluding treaties on occupational health and safety and minor amendments to protocols), showing the date of the USA's signature and subsequent ratification, accession, or acceptance where relevant. One striking trend emerging from this history is the drop in the number ratifications since the end of the Cold War (see Figure 21.1). In the period 1970–91, the USA ratified or acceded to twelve of the fifteen environmental treaties it signed out of a total of eighteen treaties concluded. However, in the period 1992–2016 the USA ratified only eight of the twelve treaties it signed, out of a total of seventeen concluded (and three of these ratifications were protocols dealing with three different air pollutants under the same Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution). The average ratification rate of signed treaties has therefore dropped from 80 per cent in the period 1970–1991 to 50

Table 21.1 History of USA's signature and ratification of major international environmental treaties, 1970–2016

Name of treaty	Date of signature	Date of ratification or acceptance
Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar) 1971	2 February 1971	18 December 1986
Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-bed and Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof 1971	11 February 1971	18 May 1972
Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species 1972	3 March 1973	14 January 1974
London Convention on Ocean Dumping 1972	29 December 1972	30 August 1975
United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1972	NA	NA
World Heritage Convention 1972	16 November 1972	7 December 1973
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species or Wild Animals 1979	NA	NA
Geneva Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution 1979	13 November 1979	30 November 1981
Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources 1980	20 May 1980	2 February 1982
Protocol to the 1970 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution on Long-Term Financing of the Co-operative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-Range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe 1984	28 September 1984	29 October 1984
Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer 1985	22 March 1985	27 August 1986
Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer 1987	16 September 1987	21 April 1988
Protocol to the 1970 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution Concerning the Control of Emissions of Nitrogen Oxides or their Transboundary Fluxes 1988	1 November 1988	13 July 1989
Basel Convention on Control of the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal 1989	22 March 1990	NA
Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context 1991	26 February 1991	NA
Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context 1991	NA	NA
Madrid Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty 1991	17 October 1991	1 November 1996
Protocol to the 1970 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution concerning the Control of Emissions of Volatile Organic Compounds or their Transboundary Fluxes 1991	19 November 1991	NA
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 1992	12 July 1992	15 October 1992
Convention on Biological Diversity 1992	4 June 1993	NA
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification 1994	14 October 1994	17 November 2000
International Tropical Timber Agreement 1994 (replacing the 1983 agreement)	27 December 1988	14 November 1996
Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty 1996	24 September 1996	NA
Protocol to the 1972 London Convention on Ocean Dumping 1996	31 March 1998	NA
Kyoto Protocol 1997	12 November 1998	NA
Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution on Heavy Metals 1998	24 June 1998	10 January 2001

Table 21.1 *(Continued)*

Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution on Persistent Organic Pollutants 1998	24 June 1998	22 November 2004
Rotterdam Convention on Pesticides and Industrial Chemicals 1998	11 September 1998	NA
Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone 1999	1 December 1999	22 November 2004
Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety 2000	NA	NA
Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants 2001	23 May 2001	NA
Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity, 2010	NA	NA
Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol 2012	NA	NA
Minamata Convention on Mercury 2013	6 November 2013	6 November 2013 (under the president's executive power)
Paris Agreement 2015	22 April 2016	3 September 2016 (under the president's executive power)

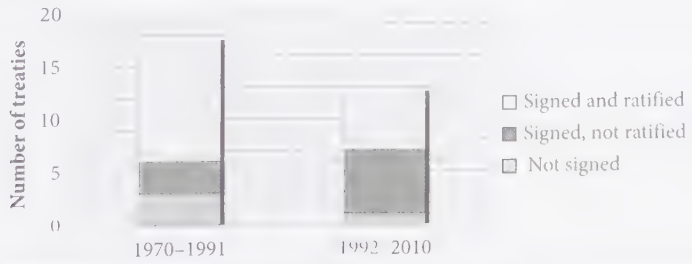
Sources: United Nations Environment Program (2005a) and the United Nations Treaty Collection, available at http://treaties.un.org/pages/ParticipationStatus.aspx.

per cent of signed treaties in the period 1992–2010. If we compare ratifications to the total number of multilateral treaties concluded, then the USA's participation rate dropped from 66 to 47 percent. If the three Protocols on Air Pollution are bundled into one effective protocol then the percentage of ratifications drops to 29 per cent of total treaties concluded in the post–Cold War period. All but three of the Senate ratifications since 1970 were under a Democrat-controlled Congress. (The Obama administration did not present the Minamata Convention on Mercury 2013 or the Paris Agreement to the Senate for its advice and consent but instead relied on executive powers, on the grounds that new implementation legislation was not required.)

KEY POINTS

- A Republican-controlled Congress is considerably more hostile to environmental laws and treaty obligations than a Democrat-controlled Congress.
- US international environmental leadership has generally waned in the post–Cold War period, with the exception of the Obama administration.
- Under the Obama administration, the US played a diplomatic leadership role in contributing to the success and speedy ratification of the Paris Agreement 2015.
- The Trump administration has returned the USA to the status of an environmental laggard.

Figure 21.1 International environmental treaties ratified by the USA, 1970–2010.



Explaining US foreign environment policy

The foregoing history of US environmental foreign policy making since the 1970s raises an interesting puzzle: aside from the Obama administration, why has US leadership tended to wane as global and transboundary environmental problems have become more, rather than less, serious and threatening to the global economy and global security? We can begin by drawing together six key insights that have emerged from the history of US environmental foreign policy making since the 1970s.

First, the environmental sympathies or antipathies of successive US presidents are crucial, but not sufficient, to explain shifts in US foreign environmental policy making. It is also necessary to examine the composition of other agencies in the executive branch (the EPA, the State Department) and other branches of government, most notably Congress. Despite the president's significant executive power and foreign policy prerogatives, it is Congress that passes laws, levies taxation, and controls spending. Given that the ratification of treaties rests with the Senate, a pale green president (even with a dark green vice-president) faced with a hostile Congress can do very little (e.g. the Clinton–Gore administration), while a dark green Congress together with a strong environmental movement and growing public environmental concern can motivate an indifferent president to support domestic and international environmental initiatives (e.g. the Nixon administration). The Obama administration's efforts to circumvent Congress by relying on executive powers to regulate CO_2 emissions represents an exception. While it produced a significant pay-off in climate diplomacy, at the domestic level it drew hostility from the Republican-controlled congress, provoked a legal challenge to the Clean Power Plan, and can be easily rescinded by a new President. In contrast, laws passed by Congress are much harder to change (as critics of the Clean Air Act have found).

Second, different environmental problems (biodiversity loss, ozone depletion, marine mammal protection, climate change) vary considerably in their complexity, predictability, gravity, and lead time to materialize; their relationship to American cultural and political values; the range of causal factors that produce them; the scale and costs of measures to address them; and the distribution of costs in terms of different industries and regions. The two landmark treaties of the post–Cold War period, the CBD and above all the climate change regime, have proved to be much more controversial across all of these dimensions than any of the other environmental treaties negotiated during the period under discussion.

Third, the history of US engagement in environmental treaty making since the 1970s has shown that it is more likely to be an environmental laggard if the provisions of an international environmental treaty are incompatible with its domestic policy and legal setting, *and* those polices and laws regulations cannot easily be changed without a significant backlash from conservative political elites and key interest groups. Conversely, while the USA has tended not to be an importer of 'foreign environmental policy' it has sometimes played a leading role in exporting its own environmental regulations into environmental treaties (DeSombre 2000), such as the US ozone diplomacy. The Obama administration managed to bring federal climate policy and law into closer alignment with the international climate regime *only by circumventing Congress*.

Fourth, while US interest groups tend to have less direct influence on foreign policy than on domestic policy, their influence on domestic environmental initiatives can have significant indirect effects on foreign policy. Moreover, business interest groups have had much more influence on domestic and foreign environmental policy than environmental NGOs (Falkner 2001) when the potential economic costs of international cooperation are high (e.g. CBD, Kyoto Protocol, Cartagena Protocol, Nagoya Protocol), while environmental NGOs have had relatively more influence when the costs are low (e.g. the whaling moratorium, Montreal Protocol).

Fifth, US foreign environmental policy cannot be examined in isolation from broader developments in US foreign policy. As we have seen, the Nixon administration's leadership at the 1972 Stockholm Conference cannot be understood in isolation from the political fallout from the Vietnam War, while the second Bush administration's international response to climate change cannot be understood in isolation from his preoccupation with the war on terror and the pivotal role played by Vice-President Cheney's national energy strategy within the USA's national security strategy. President Obama's initial response to climate change was shaped by his administration's domestic and international response to the global financial crisis.

Sixth, the end of the Cold War served as a key turning point in the waning of US international environmental leadership by producing a new geopolitical context in which international environmental negotiations were to take place. The disintegration of the Soviet Union had removed a major incentive for US cooperation with its allies and others within its sphere of influence. As the sole superpower in the first decade of the post–Cold War world, the USA took advantage of its greater range of exit options than any other state to avoid entanglement in the increasingly demanding processes of multilateralism. The USA's increasing inclination to act unilaterally or in like-minded coalitions rather than multilaterally during the 1990s and early 2000s has affected environmental diplomacy, as it has many other policy domains.

The end of the Cold War also happened to coincide with the emergence of a new and more complex set of global environmental problems that have challenged what have traditionally been understood as 'core' US economic and security interests. The management of intellectual property over biodiversity, the regulation of the transboundary movement of genetically modified organisms, and, above all, the mitigation of climate change, have posed direct challenges to the USA's traditional economic, security, and energy interests. In the case of the climate challenge, the energy-intensive and carboniferous structure of the US economy (which has created powerful oil majors and strong regional dependencies on fossil fuels, reflected in the US Senate), the US preference for economic neoliberalism, the intensive political polarization on climate policy, and the fragmented character of the US political system have joined forces to prevent a deep and concerted decarbonization of the US economy. The status quo is reinforced by key elements of US grand strategy, which has also constrained the ability of the USA to adopt a more proactive response to climate change.

US grand strategy and the environment

US grand strategy represents an overriding prioritization of US foreign policy objectives and goals, backed up with particular strategies, preferred modes of engagement, and preferred policy tools. Yet environmental issues have never played a central role in shaping US grand strategy and they have generally been accorded low priority in the pecking order of foreign policy objectives and goals. As Robert Falkner has noted, 'unlike trade and monetary policy, environmental policy has never been central to the US effort to create international order' (Falkner 2005: 586). Instead, US grand strategy has increasingly set significant limits on US foreign environmental policy after the Cold War.

Throughout both the Cold War and post–Cold War periods, US grand strategy has remained committed to securing the military and economic supremacy of the USA, promoting a stable world capitalist system, and promoting the spread of liberal democracy. While the last of these foreign policy goals is generally conducive to environmental social learning, the other elements stand in a more problematic relationship.

To the extent that the growth of an unreconstructed world capitalist system based on neo-liberal economic ideology remains a central pillar of US grand strategy, we are unlikely to see the USA emerge as a leader in promoting in the goals of sustainable development, initially endorsed at the 1992 Earth Summit and updated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), agreed in 2015 to replace the Millennium Development Goals. The SDGs require all decision makers, including foreign policy elites, to work towards ending poverty, protecting the global environment, and ensuring prosperity for all. However, the appealing goal of policy integration conceals a set of deep-seated debates over whether a rapidly growing world economic and financial system of the kind promoted by the USA is capable of delivering the SDGs in general, or climate protection in particular. The neo-liberal economic order promoted by the USA since the 1980s, and especially since the end of the Cold War, is deeply resistant to the kind of 'thick regulation' demanded by proponents of ecological sustainability or 'strong ecological modernization' (Christoff 1996; Eckersley 2004). The recession of 2007–8, triggered by the sub-prime mortgage crisis, is in part a product of international financial deregulation promoted by the USA, which made it politically difficult for the Obama administration to address climate change despite the green stimulus package. The high-energy and high-consumption lifestyles of Americans have also remained largely non-negotiable, despite the growth of the green consumer and producer movements. In contrast, the EU emerged in the 1990s as the green leader not only in environmental diplomacy but also in domestic efforts at policy integration through the adoption of sustainable development in the Treaty of the European Union (Article 6).

Both the US economy and US hegemony developed on the back of a cheap and abundant supply of fossil fuels and therefore a highly carboniferous regime of capital accumulation (Paterson 2009: 148). The US has the world's largest coal reserves (around 22 per cent), and fifty-two of the hundred Senators come from states in which coal has traditionally contributed to the state economy and employment (Fisher 2006: 480). Although coal is now in decline, fracking (for gas and oil) has spread across twenty-six states and is expected to further expand into other states. Likewise, cheap and abundant oil has been central 'to the vigor and growth of the American economy and to the preservation of a distinctly *American* way of life' (Klare 2004: xiii–xiv). Oil has also fuelled the USA's vast military apparatus and was used as a strategic resource by the USA during the Cold War in pursuing its strategy of containment and in the overall management of its Western leadership (Bromley 1991, 2005). As Keohane has put it, 'In a material sense, oil was at the centre of the redistributive system of the American hegemony' (Keohane 1984: 140). The US oil majors and allied industries have been key players in obstructing domestic efforts to reduce US dependence on oil (Newell and Paterson 1998), and most of the US oil majors have been slow to invest in non-carbon forms of energy compared to their European counterparts (Kolk and Levy 2001; Goel 2004: 476).

While the US Department of Defense has demonstrated a considerable shift in its strategic thinking by linking climate change and energy security (see Controversies 21.1), this has put it at odds with Congress, which has supported continued investment in fossil fuels and falling prices to maintain economic competitiveness, despite the rapid growth in renewable energy. If it were not for the shale gas revolution, political elites might have been more motivated to focus on domestic innovation in alternative energy sources, efficiency, and demand management.

CONTROVERSIES 21.1: HYDROCARBON ENERGY SECURITY VERSUS CLIMATE SECURITY

In his famous 'crisis of confidence speech' televised to the nation on 15 July 1979 during the second energy crisis, President Jimmy Carter declared that 'In little more than two decades we've gone from a position of energy independence to one in which almost half the oil we use comes from foreign countries, at prices that are going through the roof' (Carter 1979). In response to soaring inflation and gasoline queues he announced a range of measures, including import quotas, energy conservation measures, and significant investment in developing domestic sources of energy (including renewables and coal).

Between 1979 and 2008, America's dependence on imported oil steadily increased along with oil prices. The price of crude oil rose from below $20 a year after the Asian financial crisis of 1997 to a record high of just over $140 per barrel by 2008, although prices have since fallen due to increasing supply and falling demand. This situation produced a confluence of risks, including concerns over 'peak oil', increasing US dependence on supply from unstable regions, and the growing risks of climate change from the continued production and consumption of fossil fuels. For example, in *Powering America's Defence: Energy and the Risks to National Security*, the Military Advisory Board of the Center for Naval Analysis argued that excessive dependence on oil weakens international leverage, undermines economic stability, and increases US vulnerability, and that 'inefficient use and overreliance on oil burdens the military, undermines combat effectiveness, and exacts a huge price tag—in dollars and lives' (CNA 2009, vii).

However, rather than synchronize energy security and climate policy, the Bush–Cheney energy strategy focused on increasing the supply of energy (primarily, but not exclusively, fossil fuels) rather than reducing energy demand or imposing an increasingly stringent cap on emissions. In contrast, under the Obama administration the Department of Defense emerged as one of the key innovators in low-carbon technologies and biggest consumers of renewable energy, based on linking energy and climate security. Energy efficiency and innovation in renewable energy technologies were seen as 'force multipliers' that would increase operational effectiveness, reduce the number of combat forces diverted to protect energy supply lines, reduce energy costs, and reduce GHG emissions in support of US climate change initiatives (US DoD and DoE 2010).

At the same time, security analysts were increasingly turning their attention to the different ways in which climate change impacts would work as 'threat multipliers', such as the increasing incidence of extreme weather, the proliferation of new diseases, heightened internal and international tensions resulting from large-scale migration caused by environmental displacement, ocean acidification and loss of fisheries, changes in agricultural production and water availability, and food shortages and rising food prices (e.g. CNA 2007; Busby 2008; DoD 2014). Moreover, climate change also threatens economic and financial

security since companies, investors, economies, and the global financial system are all increasingly exposed to climate risks if decarbonization occurs too slowly, and they are exposed to investments in stranded fossil fuel assets if decarbonization occurs quickly. These concerns are reflected in the draft recommendations of the G-20's Financial Stability Board's Taskforce on Climate-Related Financial Disclosure (TCFD).

Yet the urgency of linking the US's energy security needs with climate change were considerably dampened by the end of the Obama administration's second term due to the so-called 'shale revolution', which produced a dramatic shift in the US's domestic hydrocarbon production profile (Bang and Skodvin 2014). As early as the 1980s, American energy companies had developed new techniques (such as horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracking) for extracting natural gas and oil from rock formations, particularly shale. The rapid spread of these technologies saw gas production soar and prices plummet such that by the end of the decade gas-fired electricity generation had become cheaper than coal-fired generation. Likewise, from 2009 to 2015, US crude oil production rose in each successive year (most spectacularly in Texas) in response to high crude oil prices to reach its highest levels since 1972 (US EIA 2016a), although prices have since fallen due to increasing supply and falling demand. By 2013, the US was producing more oil domestically than it imported from foreign sources (Whitehouse 2016) and by 2015 the US had emerged as the largest producer of natural gas and petroleum in the world (US EIA 2016b), although by 2016 the US was third to Saudi Arabia and Russia in petroleum production.

The increasing domestic production of fossil fuels was supported by the Obama administration as part of its 'all of the above' energy strategy. Yet in its final year of office, the Obama administration could boast that during its two terms 'domestic energy-related emissions have fallen to their lowest level in 20 years, and our dependence on foreign oil is at a 40-year low—and declining' (Whitehouse 2016). Although the administration's climate and energy policies can take some credit for the historic decline in the US's emissions by 2016 (US EIA 2016c), the decline in economic activity following the 2007–8 financial crisis and the switch from coal to gas also played a key role. Although gas is much less emissions-intensive than coal, the sheer scale of growth in US gas production and consumption were expected to result in emissions from gas surpassing those from coal by the end of 2016 (US EIAc, 2016).

In stark contrast, the Trump administration's climate and energy agenda has focused on dismantling the Obama legacy and aggressively promoting fossil fuel exploration, extraction, and use so that the US can achieve 'global dominance' as an 'energy superpower' (Whitehouse 2017).

Explaining environmental foreign policy

Only a multi-level analysis that incorporates the international system and domestic politics (including the state, society, the economy, key political forces, and foreign policy elites) can piece together an explanation of US foreign environmental policy (Barkdull and Harris 2002). This rules out structural realist and Marxist accounts that attribute minimal autonomy to the state on the assumption that its decisions are essentially a reflection of systemic imperatives that derive from the anarchic structure of the state system or from particular configurations of economic power. Yet to acknowledge the need for a multi-level analysis begs the question of which level (if any) is more important and to what extent priority should be accorded to power, interests, ideas/norms, or identities/roles in explaining the general pattern of waning US leadership in foreign environmental policy.

In US foreign environmental policy making, domestic politics tends to play a much more significant role in policy choices than does international politics (Hopgood 1998; DeSombre 2000, 2005; Falkner 2005), which is not to argue that international influences are easily separable or unimportant. The foregoing history of US foreign environment policy has shown that US traditional energy interests, and consideration of relative economic gains vis-à-vis rising powers such as China, must be factored in. Yet the meaning of energy security, and what count as relative gains and losses, are not objective and self-evident but rather are socially selected and constructed through the discourses and policies of foreign policy elites.

The importance of domestic institutions in this context is acknowledged in Putnam's (1988) two-level game approach, which highlights how the US executive's international 'win-set' is determined by the Senate ratification process, along with domestic preferences and coalition interests. This approach has been usefully applied to explain the second Bush administration's repudiation of the Kyoto Protocol (Lisowski 2002). While this provides a convincing account of US environmental laggardship in foreign policy, the same approach struggles to explain leadership other than through the absence of domestic interests blocking leadership.

Although Putnam's theory acknowledges the creative agency of the executive, its rationalist premises underplay the international normative commitments

of the executive and foreign policy elites and the ways in which interests, costs, and benefits are actively constructed through discourses and policies. Foreign policy is as much a two-level discursive game of constructing interests and international roles (e.g. Cantir and Kaarbo 2012) as it is a two-level game of balancing competing interests and roles. For example, the Obama administration emerged as an international climate leader because climate change was a legacy issue for the president and especially for his secretary of state, John Kerry. This provided the motivation to improvise around domestic veto players in Congress, to avoid Senate ratification, and to redefine US interests to bring them into closer alignment with the demands of the international climate regime by highlighting the national benefits of early action and the costs of failing to act. More generally, interest-based approaches cannot explain why the USA would bother to play a leadership role in relation to other environmental issues that do not impinge upon security or economic interests. Why, for example, would the USA go to such great lengths (employing persuasion, economic sanctions, and even bribery) to support an international moratorium on whaling if not for a strong domestic normative commitment within American society to the preservation of whales?

However, such political unity over environmental policy is now rare. US environmental policy making has been increasingly plagued by domestic political polarization in Congress, as well internal divisions within federal agencies, which tends to produce more dramatic swings in foreign environmental policy than in corporatist political systems which are dominant in the EU. Climate change is a source of catastrophic risk, but US political elites have not incorporated it into security policy in the same way as terrorist risks even though the longer-term risks of climate change are more pervasive, serious, and certain than the risks of terrorism. Likewise, the Bush–Cheney administration understood US energy security in isolation from the risks posed by climate change—an approach also adopted by the Trump administration—which produced a clear conflict between energy and climate concerns. In contrast, the EU has traditionally taken a precautionary approach to climate change and has increasingly sought to frame energy security and climate policy as two sides of the same coin.

To understand the waxing and waning of US environmental foreign policy commitment, it is necessary to develop a more fine-grained multi-level analysis that is attentive to the ways in which costs, benefits, interests, and relative gains and losses are actively constructed through the ideologies, discourses, and policies of foreign policy elites. Constructivist foreign policy analysis, including the new turn to role theory (e.g. Cantir and Kaarbo 2012; Wehner and Thies 2014), has the resources to provide such a nuanced analysis. Neoclassical realism also has potential if it moves beyond treating domestic ideas merely as 'intervening variables' (e.g. Purdon 2013). Both approaches understand foreign policy making as a purposive activity that involves the formulation and pursuit of objectives, goals, and strategies by foreign policy elites, and both situate decision makers in their historical and institutional context and seek to understand their traditions and cultures, causal ideas, and principled beliefs and how they have interpreted their environment by selecting and endowing some phenomenon with significance while screening out others.

In the case of the USA, there has been plenty of 'screening out' in the approach to the science of global warming. In contrast, scepticism towards climate change is largely absent in the global South and much less pronounced among political leaders, the media, and the public in western Europe (McCright and Dunlap 2003; Boykoff and Boykoff 2004). In the US, political polarization extends to the causes, consequences, and policy response to climate change, irrespective of general scientific literacy and trust in science (Funk and Kennedy 2016). However, conservative scepticism towards climate science is more often a mask for concerns about the short-term economic and political consequences of climate change legislation (Fisher, Waggle and Leifeld 2013) or a more general aversion to more government regulation.

More generally, the social construction of new security risks and new ecological risks by political elites in the USA since the end of the Cold War has remained rooted in the traditional 'high' versus 'low' politics distinction, which rests on certain understandings of the 'core' and 'peripheral' business of the US state. In contrast, the EU has displayed a more risk-averse posture in the post–Cold War period, particularly in response to the potential risks of not only climate change but also genetically modified organisms (GMOs) (Falkner 2007). In the case of GMOs, whereas the USA has pushed for regulatory harmonization to promote trade

liberalization in what it regards as a benign technology, in the EU NGOs have played a major role in framing the problem as a matter of both sovereign and consumer choice: the right to know and to choose safe food based on the precautionary principle, and resistance to corporate control over the agri-food chain (Levidow 2007: 133).

Yet the economic, energy, and security interests of the USA are not pre-given but rather always open to redefinition by social agents, including foreign policy elites. The key problem is that there is too much political divergence among US political elites to enable the creation of greater synergies in the construction of these interests in the post–Cold War period.

KEY POINTS

- Foreign policy making is a purposive activity that involves the formulation and pursuit of international objectives, goals, and strategies by foreign policy elites, who interpret their environment and select and construct policy in accordance with their ideas, beliefs, and institutional contexts.
- Domestic environmental politics tends to exert more influence on US foreign environmental policy than international politics, but it cannot be examined in isolation from shifts in international politics and broader developments in US foreign policy.
- The USA has rarely been an importer of 'foreign environmental policy' ideas from abroad but it has often sought to 'export' its domestic environmental regulations.
- The key international environmental problems of the post–Cold War period have increasingly challenged US grand strategy, while US grand strategy has tended to constrain the ability of the USA to adopt a proactive response to these problems, especially to climate change.

Conclusion

If there is one major lesson to be learned from the foregoing history of US foreign environmental policy making it is that sustained US leadership in foreign environmental policy requires a considerable alignment of domestic political forces. Ideally, this would require widespread acceptance of the need for an integrated energy, economic, and environmental strategy for sustainable development (including climate protection) that guides both domestic and foreign policy making. It would require a green president surrounded by a forceful and environmentally sympathetic cabinet, an environmentally sympathetic Congress, a well-funded scientific community, a vigorous environmental movement, and an environmentally proactive business community that cooperates with the environment movement because it sees market advantage in being an environmental pace-setter. However, the US political system and political culture have thus far failed to produce anything closely approximating such an alignment of political forces, and the election of the Trump administration and 114th Congress has pushed back this more modest possibility for at least another four years.

QUESTIONS

1. How relevant are the environmental sympathies of the president in accounting for US international environmental leadership?
2. What role has Congress played in US foreign environmental policy making?
3. Why was the USA an international environmental leader in the 1970s?
4. Why did the USA play a leadership role in the Montreal Protocol given the anti-environmental sympathies of the Reagan administration?
5. Why was the end of the Cold War a turning point in US foreign environmental policy making?

6. What was the relationship between US grand strategy and foreign environmental policy before and in the decade after the end of the Cold War? In what ways, if any, do environmental problems pose challenges to US grand strategy?
7. Why did President George W. Bush repudiate the Kyoto Protocol in 2001?
8. What is the relationship between energy security and environmental security?
9. What theories of foreign policy can best explain the shifts in US foreign environmental policy making from the 1970s?
10. How did the Obama administration play a leadership role in climate diplomacy in the face of a hostile US Congress?

FURTHER READING

Bukovansky, M. , Clark, I. , Eckersley, R. , Price, R. , Reus-Smit, C. and Wheeler, N. J. (2012) *Special Responsibilities: Global Problems and American Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), Chapter 4: 'Climate Change'.

This chapter provides a detailed account of the international attribution of 'special responsibilities' on the US to act as a climate change leader, and the US response.

Harris, P. G. (ed.) (2001), *The Environment, International Relations, and US Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press).

This edited collection covers a range of case studies of US environmental foreign policy making.

Hopgood, S. (1998), *American Environmental Foreign Policy and the Power of the State* (New York: Oxford University Press).

A detailed examination of US foreign environmental policy from the Stockholm Summit to the Rio Summit that rejects realist, pluralist, and Marxist accounts, and highlights the core role played by senior members of the US executive in shaping foreign policy.

Klare, M. (2004), *Blood and Oil* (New York: Metropolitan Books).

This book provides a detailed analysis of America's growing petroleum dependence and the ways this has shaped national energy and security strategies and led to the increasing use of the US military to secure supply.

Paterson, M. (2009), 'Post-hegemonic climate change?', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 11/1: 140–58.

This article explains the differences between US and EU climate policy and diplomacy in terms of different strategies of accumulation, characterized as 'carboniferous capitalism' versus 'ecological modernization'.

Scott, J. (director) (2016), *The Age of Consequences*, http://theageofconsequences.com/.

This documentary film provides important insights into how the US military has responded to the threat of climate change.

Soden, D. (ed.) (1999), *The Environmental Presidency* (Albany: State University of New York Press).

This edited collection provides a detailed examination of the role of the US president in environmental and natural resource policy, focusing on the different facets of the president's constitutional and leadership powers.

Vig, N. and Kraft, M. (eds) (2006), *Environmental Policy: New Directions for the Twenty First Century* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly).

A comprehensive edited collection on all facets of US environmental policy making in the domestic and international context

ENDNOTES

1. These include the Brundtland Report (WCED 1987), the United Nations Environment Program's *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment* (UNEP 2005b), the UK Stern Report (Stern 2007), and the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (e.g. IPCC 2014).
2. According to Michael Lisowski (2002: 114), an ABC News poll released on 17 April 2001 revealed that 61 per cent of Americans supported ratification of the Kyoto Protocol.

You can find a range of online resources to support your learning at www.oup.com/uk/cox_stokes3e/.

SECTION 6

Futures and Scenarios

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The American liberal order: from creation to crisis

G. John Ikenberry

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Introduction

This chapter examines the rise and evolution of the US-created liberal order and modern challenges to it. The first sections look at how that order was constructed after the Second World War. The next examines the successes of that order. The chapter then goes onto to discuss the end of the 'socialist' project in the 1980s and why then a number of writers began to talk of a triumph of the liberal order. The chapter then concludes by examining some of the major threats to this order today, suggesting that the greatest danger may not be coming from without, in the shape of authoritarian powers such as China, but more immediately from within, as a result of Donald Trump's rejection of the American liberal tradition.

Present at creation

In the decades after the Second World War, the United States and other liberal democratic states together built a distinctive type of 'liberal hegemonic order' (see Key quotes 22.1). Of course, this was not the first time during the twentieth century that the United States had attempted to build such a system following a major global conflict. In the aftermath of the First World War, Woodrow Wilson—a quintessential liberal—had also tried but failed to construct such an edifice. But then the time was not ripe, either at home, where isolationism persisted as a powerful force in American politics, or abroad, where the conditions in Europe were simply

too unstable to allow for such a grand plan to be implemented. By 1945, however, circumstances had changed dramatically. Western Europe and Great Britain were now almost entirely dependent on the US. The US was in absolute and relative terms far more powerful than at any time before. And at home in the US, there was now a much greater appetite for a more 'internationalist' grand strategy. Lessons had also been learned from what had gone wrong before. Indeed, many policy makers in Washington—much influenced by Franklin Delano Roosevelt's liberal 'New Deal'—were determined to make sure they did not repeat the errors of the past—errors which in their view had led to what E. H. Carr in his 1939 book had termed a 'twenty years' crisis'. And one of the lessons they learned was that peace required a stable and integrated world economy—a liberal order by any other name, which took as its starting-point the idea that without open markets and the free flow of goods across state boundaries the international system was bound for conflict and war. As Roosevelt's Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, rather pithily put it (though repeating somebody else's words), 'when goods don't cross borders, soldiers will'.

KEY QUOTES 22.1: ERIC HELLEINER

Even before the United States had entered the war, Roosevelt had committed in his famous 'four freedoms' speech of January 1941 that the post-war world would provide a new kind of 'freedom from want' for people 'everywhere in the world'.

(*Helleiner 2015*)

To an extraordinary degree, the American-led world order was built on a veritable 'layer cake of institutions' including, of necessity, a new array of important global economic bodies. These bodies included, among others, the International Monetary Fund, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (later the World Trade Organization), and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Together these—and several later additions—constituted the foundation of what became known as the Bretton Woods system: a system based on an agreement finally signed by all 44 allied nations who gathered together New Hampshire in July 1944 to establish a system of rules, institutions, and procedures to regulate the international monetary system. Of course, not all the ideas that went into the Bretton Woods project came from the US. The great liberal economist, John Maynard Keynes, also played a key role. But without the US and the power it possessed, that order could never have come into being.

The US was also deeply involved at the same time in creating or supporting the establishment of a series of other international institutions designed either to regulate the relationship between states (the United Nations was formed in 1945 and based in New York), to strengthen cooperation between the European countries (the US encouraged the creation of what later became known as the European Coal and Steel Community), or to involve the United States ever more deeply in the affairs of Europe itself, through the new North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). NATO had several purposes, of course, one of which was military—namely to deter a Soviet invasion of Western Europe—and another of which was to provide the United States with a set of allies upon whom it could depend in dangerous times. But in a more profound sense, as those present at its creation in April 1949 understood only too well, even though NATO was presented to the American public as a vehicle with a distinct Cold War role, at heart its principles were liberal. As the preamble to the NATO Treaty made clear, 'the parties' to the NATO Treaty 'reaffirm their faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations'. NATO, it went on, was 'determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law'. Whether or not NATO always remained true to these principles is a moot point. Nonetheless, it was evident that even if some members of the alliance did not always act according to the stated norms—as they did not for many years in Spain, Portugal, Greece, or Turkey during the Cold War—the sooner they did so the better it would be for all concerned.

KEY POINTS

- In 1919 Woodrow Wilson attempted to build a US-led liberal order, but the conditions at home and abroad made this impossible.
- After the Second World War the United States had both the power and the vision to develop a liberal order.
- The liberal order was based on US power but involved the creation of a set of global institutions, an agreed set of economic rules, and a set of shared values.

Liberal order: new world order

Over the next half-century, the United States used the system of rules and institutions it had built to good effect. Thus a one-time enemy state, West Germany, was quickly bound to its democratic Western European neighbours through the European Coal and Steel Community (and, later, the European Community) and to the United States through the Atlantic security pact. Another old enemy, Japan, was then bound to the United States through an alliance partnership and expanding economic ties. Meanwhile, the system established at Bretton Woods in 1944 laid down the monetary and trade rules that facilitated the opening and subsequent flourishing of the world economy (see Key quotes 22.2)—an astonishing achievement given the ravages of war and the competing interests of the great powers. Additional agreements between the United States, Western Europe, and Japan further solidified the open and multilateral character of the post-war world economy. And all this in the shadow of a Cold War which divided Europe, led to enormous military expenditures by the United States, and involved the US in costly wars in Korea and Vietnam, not to mention several other interventions in the Third World.

KEY QUOTES 22.2: G. JOHN IKENBERRY

Over the past sixty years [the liberal order] has facilitated a positive transformation. The world economy was opened up and golden years of growth and development were ushered in.

(Ikenberry 2016)

It is easy enough now to take this new order for granted, as if it were bound to happen and might have happened with, or without, the United States. But we should not underestimate how historically unique this new order was. Any international order dominated by a powerful state is based on a mix of coercion and consent. But the US-led order was distinctive in that it was more liberal than imperial, less coercive than consensual, and something into which other states wished to buy in. Geir Lundestad has talked of the United States having created an empire after the Second World War, but one in which other players—most notably in Western Europe—wished to become associated with. It was in his words an 'empire by invitation', one which turned out to be unusually accessible while commanding a wide degree of support from other partners. It was also successful and was likely to be so, given that the international rules and institutions it championed were rooted in and reinforced by the evolving global forces of democracy and capitalism (Lundestad, 1986). Certainly if one were to measure the success of the liberal order then one need look no further than the way in which the world economy evolved after the war. When the United States set out on its long journey in 1945, it may have been materially wealthy. But the other Western countries were not. Nor was there anything like a functioning global economic system. From the 1950s onwards, though, the world witnessed the beginning of the reconstruction of a new global economy. Indeed, so successful was this that between 1950 and 1973 the annual real GDP growth of developed market economies averaged around 5 per cent. Moreover, this growth was smooth, with none of the major recessions seen in the inter-war years. At the same time, America's liberal partners in Europe and Asia experienced a speedy recovery as well. In the late 1940s countries such as West Germany and Japan were only starting to recover from war. Twenty-five years later they had become booming economies in their own right. Naturally enough there were regions and countries where poverty remained the norm. Liberally-inspired development efforts in a number of places did not always deliver on their promises. Still, even if the world remained divided between economic haves and have-nots, as one of the more vocal and recent critics of globalization has pointed out, until the 1980s at least there was much less inequality than had existed before or was to come after (Piketty 2014). Liberalism in its first iteration had not merely delivered on stability and prosperity, therefore: it had also been successful in delivering a fairly equal (or less unequal) distribution of public goods.

Nor did its achievements end there. As the liberal order matured, within the West at least the forms of political extremism which had so scarred the inter-war period began to fade from view, most obviously in Western Europe. During the 1970s, moreover Greece, Spain, and Portugal together threw off authoritarian rule and transitioned relatively easily into the European democratic community. During the next decade Latin America underwent a similar transformation, with such countries as Chile, Argentina, and Brazil, which had once been ruled by 'men on horseback', gradually evolving towards liberal democracy too. These were no small achievements. Certainly long

before the Cold War finally came to an end, the liberal order had not just demonstrated its durability. It was beginning to draw new players into its orbit as well.

KEY POINTS

- The building of a liberal economic order led to a rapid expansion in world trade during the period after World War Two.
- The liberal order successfully integrated former enemies such as Germany and Japan.
- The liberal order also facilitated the transition to liberal democracy in formerly authoritarian states.

Liberal triumph?

The causes of the end of the Cold War have been much debated by scholars of international relations. So too have the complex consequences of its ending. For many American conservatives, of course, there is an obvious reason why Soviet power finally went under. The US and its allies—they insist—remained militarily more powerful than their enemies, and in the end the Soviet Union simply spent itself into bankruptcy. Indeed, there are some who believe that it was Reagan's escalation of the arms race in the early 1980s that finally forced the USSR to surrender. Liberals, however, look at the extraordinary events between 1989 and 1991 in a rather more nuanced way. The military power of the West may indeed have made a difference. But what turned the tide, and brought about the end of the West's main competitor, was not spending on guns but the economic and political dynamism of the liberal order itself (see Key quotes 22.3). As Robert English has observed, this not only made the idea of the West extremely attractive to those living under authoritarian systems (English 2000). It also offered a home to those looking for an alternative to what they had known through the long Cold War.

KEY QUOTES 22.3: FRANCIS FUKUYAMA

The triumph of the West, of the Western *idea*, is evident first of all in the total exhaustion of viable systematic alternatives to Western liberalism.

(Fukuyama 1992

Indeed, as the Cold War was coming to an end, at least one American writer—Francis Fukuyama—interpreted the large changes now underway throughout the world as representing an historic victory for liberalism more generally. The twentieth century, he argued, had seen the rise of powerful collectivist ideologies such as fascism and communism. But now, at last, liberalism had finally triumphed. To be sure, Fukuyama was careful to stress that he was not saying that nothing significant would happen any more, or that there would be no countries left in the world that did not conform to the liberal democratic model. As he pointed out, 'At the end of history it is not necessary that all societies become successful liberal societies, merely that they end their ideological pretensions of representing different and higher forms of human society.' This was the crucial claim. Events would continue to unfold, he noted. But they would not lead to the creation of an alternative order. 'What we are witnessing,' he wrote, 'is not just the end of the cold war, or a passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government' (Fukuyama 1992).

Fukuyama's optimism about liberalism and liberal democracy also found an expression in the way in which the United States itself began to debate grand strategy. Hitherto US foreign policy had been almost entirely shaped by the exigencies of the Cold War. But now that the Cold War was over it was possible for the United States to rethink some of its policies. However, it did not have to reinvent the wheel. After all, even if the USSR was no more, the US could draw on an already well-established liberal tradition. The difference now was that it might now be possible to realize its ambitions on a more global scale. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of Cold War hostilities, the obstacles standing in the way of liberalism had almost completely disappeared: what had once been possible only within the West itself was now possible more widely. What we might term the 'inside system' could now become the 'outside system'. The liberal order was now thrown open and exposed to the entire world. Liberalism could now go truly global for the first time.

Nor were successive post–Cold War US presidents unaware of the openings made possible by the collapse of the US's ideological rival. Indeed, both Clinton and G. W. Bush (very different leaders to be sure) saw the real possibilities of enlarging the international space

within which democracy might flourish. Of course they did it in different ways: Clinton by associating the spread of democracy with the expansion of the market; Bush by using more direct military instruments in an effort to remake the Middle East. Furthermore, whereas Bush remained very much the realist who believed in raw power, Clinton at least came into office with an agenda based on a liberal world view. Indeed, as Thomas Carothers has noted, though Clinton's policies abroad were never entirely consistent, it was the idea of liberal democracy promotion more than anything else that appeared most frequently in his early foreign policy speeches (see Carothers 2004). Indeed, for Clinton and his team, developing what he had once termed an 'American foreign policy of engagement for democracy' made perfect sense. Most obviously, it fitted into a long American liberal tradition going right back to that most famous of presidential liberals, Woodrow Wilson (see Cox 2000). It also served to provide an alternative strategic framework (and a positive one at that) to a Cold War strategy of containment that had been rendered irrelevant by the passing of Soviet communism. Clinton also assumed that the promotion of political freedom abroad might help promote US economic interests too. As Brinkley has suggested, it was in fact critical for Clinton to do this in order to legitimize what many might have thought (wrongly as it turned out) was his too idealistic approach to foreign policy. He had after all come into office stressing economic competence and had made it clear thereafter that he would always put 'economic competitiveness at the heart of' American foreign policy. Still, in Clinton's mind, there seemed to be no necessary contradiction between promoting US economic interests around the world and advancing the cause of freedom. Indeed, with Clinton, economic advantage and national political interest did not conflict at all but instead went hand in hand. Emerging democracies with a growing middle class eager to consume American products, in this view, served both America's need for markets and its desire for a world of peaceful and prosperous liberal-minded nations (Brinkley 1997).

Clinton was, however, not just keen to associate the idea of democracy with US material interests in a global world economy full of opportunity. He was also influenced by ideas. In fact, he appeared to accept the by now well-developed liberal thesis that if long-term international security was ever to be established it would more likely happen in a world of democratic states than in a world where states were authoritarian. Clinton may well have been a pragmatist rather than some starry-eyed political romantic; and he never saw democracy promotion in evangelical terms. Yet it certainly seems as if he did accept the basic premises of the democratic peace thesis. Later, one of Clinton's advisers—Strobe Talbott—argued that this core liberal argument was as close to a law of international politics as anything else he could think of. But if the evidence is to be believed, then Clinton seemed to think so too (Talbott 1996).

If the measure of the success of any order is the degree to which it persists even after the circumstances that originally gave birth to it have changed, then by any measure the liberal order proved to be remarkably durable even after the old bipolar system had given way to a new, and quite unexpected, unipolar world. Of course much had changed. But much of the liberal order remained in being after 1989 and 1991, including nearly all of the international and regional institutions which had been established in the years after the Second World War. In fact, far from the post–Cold War world lurching into 'chaos' as these institutions either faded from view or proved unable to contain the new atavistic forces unleashed by end of Soviet power—a major realist prediction at the time—they proved to be remarkably resilient. Thus far from becoming irrelevant, NATO took on new missions. There was no evidence that it ever came close to falling apart in the absence of a clear and present threat. Europe meanwhile did not descend into nationalist anarchy. Rather this most liberal of post-war projects, with its stress on cooperation and integration, sought an ever deeper union of like-minded liberal states. Nor did the world break into increasingly competitive economic blocs, as realists believed it would do. Rather, it became more 'global', with even previously closed economies such as China and Russia seeking membership of the ever enlarging (and prosperous) global club. Nor indeed the United States retreat directly into isolationism as others had anticipated. If anything, after the Cold War ended it remained as committed as ever to sustaining the liberal order which had served it (and the world) so well before. The United States may have at that point become the dominant state within a unipolar world order. But the original liberal 'bargain' struck between the US and it various allies after the Second World War, in which the United States committed itself to underwriting an order from which everybody, including the US, might benefit, remained as important as ever. The world might have been turned upside down by the unexpected collapse of the Soviet system of power. But the liberal structure underwriting the world continued.

KEY POINTS

- The collapse of communism was seen by many as representing a triumph of liberalism.
- The enduring vitality of liberalism was reflected in the fact that the US only had to develop pre-existing institutions rather than build new ones.
- Though ideologically opposed, both President Clinton and President G. W. Bush believed that liberal democracy was the key to building global order.

Crisis of the liberal order?

When Clinton left office in 2000, the American-led liberal world order seemed to be as secure as ever. Yet within a few years analysts were beginning to ask whether this order could endure (see Key quotes 22.4). There were a number of reasons why.

KEY QUOTES 22.4: JOHN IKENBERRY

The rise of China and other non-Western developing states is creating new constituencies for an updated and reformed, open, multilateral system, as opposed to new hostile voices seeking to build something that would be antithetical to openness and rule of law. The struggle today is over authority, in my view, over who sits at the table, who decides over rights and privileges in the global political hierarchy. It's not about contrasting ideologies of order and certainly not rival models of modernity.

(Ikenberry 7 May 2014)

First, American foreign policy appeared to take a sharp unilateral turn. This may have been accelerated by 9/11. But right from the outset many within the Bush administration seemed to be deeply sceptical about continuing to underwrite an international order hitherto based on multilateral institutions, rule-based agreements, and alliance partnerships. Spurred on by the so-called war on terror it also started to advance a set of new, somewhat provocative ideas about the pre-emptive use of force, which looked as if they rendered traditional alliances redundant. As Bush himself put it when justifying the Iraq War of 2003, 'when it comes to our security we really don't need anybody's permission'.

Yet whatever Bush's own unilateral inclinations may have been, America itself could hardly abandon multilateralism altogether, for the very simple reason that there remained deep underlying incentives for the United States to continue to support multilateralism: in part because of increased economic interdependence, in part because it still had an interest in maintaining a stable and legitimate international order, and in part because in spite of what many Bush supporters might have thought at the time, most Americans themselves felt more 'at home' in a world where it had close friends with whom it cooperated than a world where it was left to 'bowl alone'.

But perhaps the more serious challenge to the liberal order in the early part of the twenty-first century stemmed less from the policy preferences of one particular administration—Bush in the end was replaced by an altogether different kind of president in the form of Barack Obama—but rather from changes taking place in the wider international system. The rise of what Fareed Zakaria has called the 'rest' or what economists prefer to call 'emerging economies' point to these alterations. But neither term begins to grasp their potential significance for the liberal order. After all, if, as many now felt, a major power shift was underway, then it was at least reasonable to conclude that the world, and with it the liberal order, were heading into increasingly uncharted waters. Furthermore, if one of the new rising powers—the economically more important one—was ruled by a Communist Party which had rarely if ever viewed the democratic West with anything but suspicion, then again it was not unreasonable to ask whether the liberal order was any longer as secure as most liberals had come to believe. Indeed, if Goldman Sachs was right in forecasting that at some point in the not too distant future a China presumably still led by the Communist Party would become by some margin the largest economy in the world, was it not logical to conclude that the days of the liberal order were numbered? If the British writer, Martin Jacques, was right in suggesting that China might one day even 'rule the world' then this could only mean one thing: the end of the Western world (Jacques 2009).

We can certainly agree that China posed and continues to pose a very real challenge to the United States and the liberal democratic West. Its government's deeply authoritarian character, its still highly protected economy, its various acts of assertion in the South China Seas, its use of economic power to divide and rule countries in the Asia region, and its deployment of aid schemes in Africa that deliberately

or incidentally undermine all attempts by the West to promote good governance, can hardly be brushed aside or ignored. But the question remains: does China pose what might be termed an existential threat to the liberal order more generally? One day it might. But for the time being (and in time things can obviously change) it probably represents much less of a danger than many have so far suggested.

First, even if China is not liberal itself, at no time since it began to rise in the 1990s has it sought to establish any kind of alternative order. Rather it has sought to acquire a greater voice within the existing order. Secondly, like other rising powers, China has become economically successful only by rising within the order rather than by contesting it. Indeed, China has reaped massive economic gains from its participation within the order, indicating that the liberal order has unusual capacities for adaptation, expansion, integration, and evolution. Moreover, the very fact that it has risen within the liberal order only shows that this order is not merely designed with the West in mind but has global appeal—even or possibly especially so for a once backward and poor country such as China desperately seeking to become modern. Indeed, if the rise of China points to anything, it is how much its rise owes to joining an open and loosely rule-based system, for access to such a system has created opportunities for trade, capital, and technology exchange and for knowledge transfer. Meantime, multilateral rules created tools for states to operate on a more equal footing at the global level and provided protection for rising states.

Of course, there was and remains every chance that as China becomes more powerful it will become more assertive, and this in turn could easily put the liberal order under greater stress. But thus far Chinese leaders have never seriously deviated from the view first advanced in the 1990s that China's future lay, and will continue to lie, within the pre-existing global economic order and not outside of it. Indeed, while President Trump (as shall see in the next section) came into office in 2017 attacking this order, the Chinese leader mounted a spirited defence of it, insisting that globalization—that most quintessential of all liberal constructs—had to be protected from its critics. Naturally enough, President Xi Jinping argued, globalization was not without its problems. China moreover looked forward to major changes in the way the global economic order was governed, with far more influence being allocated to new rising powers. Still, about one thing he was clear. Globalization had delivered on its promise, and blaming it for all the troubles in the world (as Trump seemed to be doing) was not only misleading: it also threatened an order which had delivered so much and to which there was no real alternative.

KEY POINTS

- G. W. Bush may at times have acted unilaterally, but the US still remained locked in and bound by the rules of the multilateral order.
- China's economic rise from the 1990s onwards was made possible by its joining the liberal economic order, not rejecting it.
- China may be seeking a much greater voice within the global economic order but does not seek to overturn it.

Trump and the liberal order

Even in power-shifting times, the liberal order has thus remained remarkably resilient. Although the shift in power to the South and East, away from the North and West, poses real challenges that have to be carefully managed, so far this shift has not triggered a fundamental struggle over the deep principles of order. China and other non-Western developing states have continued to rise within the order rather than seek to work around its rules and institutions. Moreover, though the elites within these countries are keen to gain more influence and do not always speak in terms that liberals might find acceptable, most of the modernizing elites in these countries have remained in essence 'conservative globalizers' who have rather successfully used the open and loosely rule-based system to their advantage, seeking to advance themselves and their societies through trade and engagement with global rules and institutions. They have not sought a 'post-liberal' order based on closed blocs, economic spheres of influence, or neo-imperial groupings.

However, a cascade of political events—beginning in June 2016 with the vote in the UK to leave the European Union and continuing with the election of Donald Trump in November of the same year—has once again raised serious questions about the future of the liberal order. In many ways the two events grew out of very specific national conditions: Brexit out of

an historically ambiguous British or more precisely English attitude towards the European Union; Trump from an indigenous populist tradition reaching right back to the late nineteenth century. Yet both had much in common. Most clearly, they were both successful because both were able to tap into a belief that liberal elites living in metropolitan cities such as London and Washington were out of touch with the feelings, beliefs, and lives of ordinary people. Both were also driven by a fear that 'outsiders'—whether in the shape of the European Union in the case of the UK, or something loosely defined as globalism in the case of the United States—were undermining sovereignty. Those who voted Brexit and those who supported Trump were also deeply sceptical about the benefits of immigration. And finally, of course, those who pushed for Brexit were supported by Trump, while Trump's victory in the US was warmly welcomed by those who backed Brexit. Indeed, not only were the two events closely connected politically, it is clear that the 17 million who voted Brexit in the UK and the near 63 million Americans who backed Trump were remarkably similar in background (being in the main white, older, economically less privileged, less well educated).

There was however something more profoundly worrying about what happened in the UK and the US other than the deeply conservative appeal that both Brexiteers and Trump made to their respective constituencies—which was that both votes occurred in countries that had been in the vanguard of creating the liberal world order and building global international institutions ever since the Second World War (see Key quotes 22.5). Now it seemed as if two of the most, if not the most, liberal and open economies were heading in the opposite direction: in the UK's case away from the most successful liberal experiment of the post-war period (though significantly not away from free trade as such) and in the case of the US away from free trade itself. Trump was indeed especially vociferous in his presidential campaign, insisting that if he were to be elected, it would not be business as usual. As he made abundantly clear, he had always been (and remained) deeply sceptical about what he termed 'international unions' which tied and brought 'America down'. Furthermore, he asserted that if he were to be elected, his administration would 'never enter America into any agreement' that reduced America's ability to control its 'own affairs'. And as if to make the point clearer than the truth, he went on to stress (more than once) that unlike his more mainstream predecessors of whatever political party, he would 'no longer surrender' the United States 'or its people to the false song of globalism'. A new era was about to dawn.

KEY QUOTES 22.5: G. JOHN IKENBERRY

Is the world witnessing the demise of the U.S.-led liberal order? If so, this is not how it was supposed to happen. The great threats were supposed to come from hostile revisionist powers seeking to overturn the postwar order. The United States and Europe were supposed to stand shoulder to shoulder to protect the gains reaped from 70 years of cooperation. Instead, the world's most powerful state has begun to sabotage the order it created. A hostile revisionist power has indeed arrived on the scene, but it sits in the Oval Office.

(Ikenberry 2017)

The election of Trump thus presented a huge challenge to the liberal order. In fact, when Trump looked out at the world, there was no evidence that he saw any order at all. The world in his view was composed of competing nation states and national economies all locked in races in which there winners and losers. He certainly did not appear to see a world of partners and relationships. He even resisted making distinctions between liberal democratic friends and autocratic rivals. His comment that he trusted 'equally' Russia's Putin and Germany's Merkel was nothing if not revealing. The Trump challenge to liberal international order seemed all the more dangerous because it came with a casual disrespect for the norms and values of liberal democracy itself. Indeed, since becoming president, Trump has questioned the legitimacy of federal judges, attacked the press, and shown little regard for the constitution or the rule of law. Arguably, facts, evidence, scientific knowledge, due diligence, reasoned discourse—the essential elements of liberal democratic political life—are daily disparaged. There is an absence in the speeches made by President Trump about the virtues of American political traditions, the genius of the founding fathers, or the great struggles and accomplishments of liberal democracy; these silences speak loudly.

The profundity of this moment is greater still because of the wider crisis of governance and morale which is being witnessed right across the liberal democratic world. As I have shown, the liberal order has and

retains many strengths. Nonetheless, the centrist and progressive governing coalitions that lay behind the post-war liberal order have weakened. The order endures. But liberal democracy today looks increasingly fragile and polarized, vulnerable to far-right populism and backlash politics. Some might date these troubles to the financial crisis of 2008, when the world economic downturn emerged from within the heart of Western capitalism, setting the stage for rising economic inequality and grievances within the advanced industrial democracies, the original patrons and beneficiaries of an open and cooperative international order. But the crisis goes deeper. Globalization may have triumphed after the fall of communism. But for many the triumph of this order has come to be identified with a world which more and more looks like a global playground for the wealthy and influential. In this setting, President Trump may be regarded as less a cause than a consequence of the failings of liberal globalization. But now in office, his agenda seems to further undermine its foundations.

Tragically, therefore, Trump's dark narrative of fear and decline misses what we have examined in detail in this chapter: namely the great American accomplishment of the twentieth century in its leadership in building the post-war liberal international order. As we have shown, this is a complex and sprawling order, organized around economic openness, multilateral institutions, security cooperation, democratic solidarity, and progressive internationalist ideals. For decades, the United States has been the 'first citizen' of this post-war political grouping, providing leadership and public goods—anchoring the alliances, stabilizing the world economy, fostering cooperation, and championing the values of openness and liberal democracy. Across this order, openness has been the economic norm, multilateral rules and norms of government have given the order a sense of fairness and legitimacy, and security has been achieved through alliance partnership. Now all this appears to have been thrown in doubt by Trump.

But Trump may find that his own anti-liberal rhetoric becomes America's worst enemy. Trump has spoken volubly on several occasions of making American 'great again'. It was this appeal, no doubt, that rallied so many Americans to his banner. Yet by questioning the liberal world order and challenging its core principles of internationalism built on stable institutions, there is every chance that far from making America great—again—there is every chance that his policies will have the opposite effect. Indeed, as critics have already noted, rather than strengthening America and increasing its appeal around the world, his policies are already beginning to weaken US influence from South East Asia to Europe, from sub-Sharan Africa to Latin America. Paradoxically, a president committed to rebuilding American power could very easily do major damage to the *Pax Americana* he is dedicated to uphold.

KEY POINTS

- Before Trump was elected, writers on international affairs assumed the greatest challenge to the liberal order would be coming from rising authoritarian states.
- Trump is the first American president in modern times to have rejected the liberal foundations upon which US power has hitherto been constructed.
- Trump's rejection of the liberal order could weaken US influence in the world rather than enhance it.

QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand by the term 'liberal order'?
2. Why did the US seek to create a liberal order after the Second World War?
3. How would you measure the successes of this order after the Second World War?
4. What did Fukuyama mean when he talked of a triumph of liberalism and the end of history?
5. What impact did (a) 9/11 and (b) the 2008 financial crisis have on the liberal order?
6. If China is not a liberal polity itself, why does it remain attached to the liberal economic order?
7. What sort of threat does Donald Trump pose to liberalism and the liberal economic order?

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23

Drifting apart? The emerging end of the transatlantic partnership

Stephen M. Walt

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Introduction

Europe has been the central focus of US foreign policy since the thirteen original colonies gained independence. The United States owes its origins to European colonization of North America, and descendants of European immigrants are still a plurality of the US population. Curtailing the influence of the European great powers in the western hemisphere was a central aim of US diplomacy from the Monroe Doctrine forward, and the US had achieved this goal by the end of the nineteenth century. Since then, the United States has sought to prevent any single power from dominating Eurasia, and it eventually entered the First and Second World Wars in order to preserve a balance of power there.

After the Second World War, the United States jump-started Western Europe's economic recovery through the Marshall Plan, helped create and then lead the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and kept thousands of nuclear weapons and several hundred thousand troops in Europe to deter possible Soviet expansion. After the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union disintegrated, the United States drove the campaign to expand NATO eastwards and backed European efforts to deepen and expand the European Union (EU), while remaining wary of any European initiatives that might diminish NATO's central role. Troops from the United States and from several European countries have also fought together in a number of recent conflicts, including the long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Economic ties between the United States and Europe are equally impressive. The United States and the EU still have the largest trading and investment relationship in the world, comprising roughly 30 per cent of world trade in goods and 40 per cent in services. Moreover, foreign direct investment (FDI) in each other's economies amounts to 60 per cent of the outward

stock and 70 per cent of the inward stock of global FDI (Hamilton and Quinlan 2016). Small wonder that a recent report from the Atlantic Council identified NATO as 'the largest collection of American allies in the world' and 'America's most important trading and investment partners' (Burns and Jones 2016: 5).

The 'transatlantic partnership' and the NATO alliance retain a certain iconic status and have many vocal defenders, but America's preoccupation with and deep commitment to Europe has been eroding for some time. The United States withdrew most of its military forces from Europe after the Soviet Union disintegrated and the Cold War ended, and its current deployments there are a small fraction of its earlier presence. Despite a recent surge of US support following Russia's seizure of Crimea in 2014, the US commitment is likely to decline even more in the years ahead.

For starters, a growing percentage of US citizens appear reluctant to use US forces to defend some NATO allies, a trend that mirrors the attitudes of a growing number of Europeans. According to a Huffington Post/YouGov poll in 2014, fewer than 30 per cent of Americans supporting using military force to defend Ukraine, Latvia, or Turkey, even though the latter two states are NATO members (Moore 2014). Similarly, a Pew Research Center poll in April 2015 found that 'among Europeans, a median of 49 percent of respondents thought their country should not defend an ally' (Calabria 2014).

Furthermore, the 2016 US presidential election brought to power a man who had repeatedly questioned NATO's continued relevance, at one point calling it 'obsolete' and complaining it was 'costing us a fortune' (Gore 2016). President Donald Trump's open admiration for Russian president Vladimir Putin and his expressed desire to improve relations with Moscow has also rung alarm bells among Europeans worried about Russian intentions and raised additional doubts about America's long-term commitment to European security (Ley 2016).

Yet the trends that Trump exemplified are not wholly new. In fact, America's strategic focus has been shifting away from Europe for more than twenty-five years. The reasons are obvious: the 9/11 attacks, the Iraq and Afghan wars, Iran's nuclear program, and the perceived threat from 'violent extremism' have riveted US attention on the Middle East, while China's rising power and growing ambitions have forced US officials to devote more time and energy to Asia. In sharp contrast to the Cold War, ambitious foreign and defence policy experts no longer see expertise and engagement on European security issues as the best ticket to a prominent foreign policy career.[1]

Moreover, America's European allies have been inconsistent partners in some of Washington's biggest post–Cold War initiatives. Indeed, in some cases—such as the invasion of Iraq in 2003—key allies such as Germany and France openly opposed America's actions. NATO's European members did participate in the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, but the dismal results of that mission will discourage NATO's members from taking on similar tasks in the future. Today, the nations of Europe are increasingly preoccupied by internal challenges that defy easy solution, and this inward focus (combined with Europe's declining military capacity) makes them much less useful allies for the USA, especially in areas far from Europe itself.

Taken together, these trends herald a bleak future for the transatlantic partnership. The United States may not disengage completely and the NATO treaty may remain in force, but Europe will no longer enjoy pride of place in America's strategic thinking, and US and European interests will increasingly diverge. And because the United States can do little to address the main problems Europe faces today, its European partners will be left to sort out these challenges on their own. The United States and Europe will drift apart over the next few decades—ideally without rancor or resentment—but the end result will be a radically different transatlantic relationship.

The remainder of this chapter identifies US strategic interests, describes how they are now changing, and explains what this shift implies for US foreign and defence policy priorities. The main lesson is that the traditional justification for deep US engagement in Europe is increasingly irrelevant, and the United States will devote an increasing share of its foreign policy attention elsewhere. At the same time, Europe is facing a vexing series of challenges of its own, none of which are likely to be resolved quickly. Taken together, these challenges threaten the liberal order that is one of the West's most salient achievements and raise serious questions about the EU's long-term future. Over time, Europe's troubles will make it a less reliable and valuable partner for the United States, and these trends are likely to introduce additional sources of strain between Washington and Brussels, and between some key European capitals.

The chapter concludes by evaluating several alternative futures, including the (slim) possibility of a genuine renewal in transatlantic ties. A renaissance of this sort is unlikely, however, and the most likely outcome is a gradual but irreversible decline in transatlantic security cooperation. Economic and diplomatic relations will continue, of course, but the high-water mark of the 'transatlantic partnership' is well behind us and nothing is likely to restore it.

KEY POINTS

- Europe has long been the main focus of US foreign policy.
- The US and most European countries are formal military allies and close economic partners.
- US strategic interests are shifting away from Europe and toward the Middle East and Asia.
- As their interests diverge, the United States and Europe are likely to drift even further apart.

US grand strategy and the European commitment

For the past century or more, the US commitment to Europe followed directly from certain core principles of US grand strategy. Since becoming a great power and establishing a dominant position in the western hemisphere, the United States has sought to to prevent any other great power from dominating what George Kennan and Nicholas Spykman identified as 'key centers of industrial power' (i.e. Europe and Northeast Asia; Kennan 1954; Spykman 1942). The United States eventually aimed to preserve a balance of power in the oil-rich Persian Gulf as well, to ensure that hostile power(s) could not prevent these critical energy resources from flowing to world markets.

The justification for this strategy was straightforward. A European hegemon would have a larger economy than the United States, which might enable it to overwhelm the United States in an arms race and allow it to interfere in the western hemisphere. Keeping Europe divided among several great powers ensured that these states would focus primarily on each other and not on the United States, thereby maximizing US security and potential leverage (Mearsheimer 2014; Mearsheimer and Walt 2016).

During the first half of the twentieth century, the United States let the European powers balance each other, intervening only when the balance of power broke down and when one state—either Wilhelmine or Nazi Germany—threatened to establish a durable position of hegemony there. This motivation explains US entry into both world wars, though it is worth remembering that Washington 'passed the buck' to others at first and was the last great power to intervene in both conflicts. Getting in late minimized the cost of fighting and left the United States in a relatively better position at the end of each war.

During the Cold War, however, the United States had no choice but to go 'onshore' in Europe, because it believed the European powers might not be strong or cohesive enough to stand up to the Soviet Union on their own. So Washington forged durable alliances and stationed substantial military forces on the continent, and it played a central diplomatic role there for many years. As Joseph Joffe pointed out more than thirty years ago, US leadership of NATO and the American military presence also served to dampen potential rivalries within Europe itself, which in turn facilitated the process of European economic integration and the eventual development of the EU (Joffe 1984; Rosato 2012; Grieco 1990).[2]

To be sure, maintaining hegemony in the western hemisphere and a balance of power in Europe was not America's only objective, either during the Cold War or after. Where possible, the United States also worked to construct a broadly liberal international order, based on democracy promotion, the defence of human rights, and the development of international institutions that facilitated cooperation among the member states and made America's dominant position more palatable to its partners (see Chapter 22). These institutions included NATO, of course, but also the central components of the Bretton Woods system.[3]

On the other hand, a general commitment to liberal principles did not prevent the United States from cooperating closely with dictators such as Marshal Tito in Yugoslavia, Francisco Franco in Spain, or the various military leaders who seized power in Turkey from time to time, provided that these leaders contributed to keeping the Soviet Union out of Western Europe and thus ensured that Moscow could not establish a hegemonic position there.

As long as powerful Soviet armies stood poised in Eastern Europe, the core principles of US strategy dictated close cooperation with its Western European

partners and justified the deployment of powerful ground and air forces there. A major war in Europe may have been unlikely, but the stakes were worth the effort and deep engagement in Europe made conflict less likely, especially once the territorial status quo was tacitly acknowledged by the 1971 Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin and the 1975 Helskinki Final Act (Sarotte 2001; Trachtenberg 1999).

Today, the same strategic logic that led the United States to intervene in Europe in 1917 and 1941 and to join NATO in 1949 is drawing US attention elsewhere. The collapse of the Soviet Union left Europe without a potential hegemonic power, and the two top contenders—Russia and Germany—are losing relative power as their populations shrink and age. No other potential hegemons are in sight, which means that America's core strategic objective—to keep Eurasia divided among several major powers—is not in jeopardy. As discussed below, Europe does face a number of security problems, but none of them pose a sufficient threat to vital US interests to warrant a major investment of time or resources. It is not surprising, therefore, that the attention and effort that US policymakers devote to Europe is declining.

To be sure, the United States did drive the controversial decision to expand NATO and has been more enthusiastic than its allies about one day bringing Ukraine or Georgia into the alliance as well. But Washington's eagerness to extend the guarantees of Article V in an eastward direction was not genuine evidence of a serious strategic commitment, as advocates of expansion assumed these pledges would guarantee stability in Europe indefinitely and would therefore never have to be honoured. As Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott argued as the process of NATO expansion began: 'the prospect of membership can also foster among the nations of Central Europe and the former Soviet Union a greater willingness to resolve disputes peacefully and contribute to peace-keeping operations. Thus the process of expansion can help to promote regional stability and peace' (Talbott 1995).

For the foreseeable future, China is the only potential regional hegemon and America's only possible peer competitor. Asia's growing economic and strategic importance compounds US concerns about its rise, with the US National Intelligence Council forecasting that 'by 2030, Asia will have surpassed North America and Europe combined in terms of global power, based upon GDP, population size, military spending, and technological investment' (2012: iv). Assuming China's economy continues to grow (even if at a reduced rate), it will eventually be the world's largest and it will be substantially stronger than all of its East and Southeast Asian neighbours.

Chinese military expenditures have been rising rapidly for more than a decade, a trend likely to continue as its wealth and per capita income grow. Beijing has also become increasingly assertive in recent years—most notably regarding contested sovereignty claims in the South and East China Seas—and over time a rising China will try to encourage other Asian powers to distance themselves from Washington and embrace China's benevolent hegemony instead. The result is likely to be an intense security competition between the United States and China that will shape how each state deals with the other and with many other countries as well (Mearsheimer 2014).

The United States has responded by increasing its own security presence in the region, as part of the so-called pivot (or 'rebalancing') to Asia. Managing an effective balancing coalition will be a demanding diplomatic and military task, however, given the distances involved, the delicate relations between countries such as South Korea and Japan, the vicissitudes of domestic politics in the Philippines, Vietnam, and other Asian countries, as well as their desire to maintain economic ties with China along with close security ties with the United States. Navigating these complex cross-currents and coordinating a collective effort will take considerable time, attention, and expertise, and will inevitably draw top officials' attention away from other areas, including Europe.

Even more ominously, the United States and its European partners are unlikely to agree on how to respond to China's rise. Chinese rising power and assertiveness does not threaten Europe's vital interests, and NATO's European members have little to contribute to a future effort to constrain Chinese power or influence. In the future, Europe's primary objective will be to maintain or increase its own economic ties with China, which will include the sale of technology with direct military applications (McMillan 2014; Lague 2013).[4] If Washington asks NATO for help in countering China in Asia, in short, or if it demands that Europe halt the sale of advanced technologies to China, the European response will almost certainly be a polite but firm 'no'. Thus, not only is China's rise diverting US attention away from Europe, it is introducing a new element of friction into transatlantic relations, and in an era when Europe's nations face significant problems of their own.

KEY POINTS

- The US commitment to NATO is driven primarily by concerns about the global balance of power, and especially the desire to prevent any single state from achieving hegemony in Europe.
- The US has also sought to promote democracy and other liberal ideals, but this goal did not prevent it from collaborating with Spain under Franco, Yugoslavia under Tito, or Turkey during periods of military rule.
- There is no possible 'hegemonic power' in Europe today, so the need for a US commitment has declined and so has the US military presence.
- China is the only potential 'regional hegemon' at present, so US strategic attention is now shifting to Asia.

Europe's troubles

The European Union is a remarkable political experiment. In the aftermath of the most destructive war in history, and after centuries of recurring conflict, a generation of European leaders had the foresight and will to conceive of and create a new order based on economic integration, open borders, and the partial surrender of sovereignty to a new supranational organization. The original European Coal and Steel Community evolved, expanded, and deepened to form a single market and a partly integrated political community, and eventually created a common currency (the Euro) used by some (but not all) of its members.

For much of the past half-century, this collective effort encouraged economic growth, gave Europe a more coherent voice in international economic affairs, and reduced the danger of great power competition in Europe itself. The EU has also been an influential model for other states, and especially for the post-communist governments in Eastern Europe. Indeed, the desire for EU membership encouraged these states to adopt critical democratic reforms following the collapse of the Soviet Union and dampened potential conflicts during this delicate transition period.

Yet despite these impressive accomplishments, the EU's present condition and future prospects are not bright. It now faces at least six fundamental challenges: some that of are problems of its own creation and others that reflect broader changes in the world at large. None of them will be easy to overcome. By weakening Europe and turning its attention inward, these problems are making Europe a less valuable partner for the United States. And given the nature of these various challenges and America's other global concerns, there is little the United States can do to help Europe address them, even if the new Trump administration were inclined to do so.

Over-expansion

The EU is now a victim of its past successes. What began as a limited arrangement among six countries to coordinate the production and marketing of coal and steel has become an elaborate supranational organization with twenty-eight members, whose affairs are governed by a complicated set of political and legal institutions, a host of subsidiary agencies, and strong norms requiring consensus among all EU members regardless of size and importance. Each member state retains a separate national government, however, with authority over health, policing, fiscal policy, and defence and foreign policy. Today, Europe's Byzantine governance arrangements make America's federal system look simple by comparison.

Moreover, as the EU has grown, its membership has become increasingly heterogeneous in terms of population, economic size, per capita income, and cultural background. At more than €2 trillion, Germany's GDP is more than three hundred times larger than Malta's €6 billion, while Luxemburg's per capita income is roughly eight times larger than Latvia's and five times larger than that of Greece. The geographic size, population, and natural resource endowments of the EU's member states also vary enormously, as do their cultures, religious affiliations, and national histories.

Ironically, that heterogeneity is a key reason why the EU's newest members (mostly from eastern and south-eastern Europe) were eager to join, and why the original members encouraged their aspirations. In essence, both parties wanted the new members to become more like the rest of the community. But the EU's governing institutions must now reconcile a broader array of interests, political traditions, and historical experiences than it did in earlier periods, making it much harder to reach consensus on critical issues or to resolve underlying problems in a timely and effective manner.

As the EU has grown, in short, it has become more cumbersome, more divided, and less effective. Indeed, EU decision making is now so complicated and sclerotic that a lengthy effort to negotiate a trade agreement with Canada nearly collapsed in October 2016 due solely to opposition in the regional parliament of Wallonia, the French-speaking part of Belgium (and home to less than 1 per cent of the EU's entire population). As Mark Leonard of the European Council on Foreign Relations correctly observed 'The EU is becoming more and more ungovernable. The stakes internationally are higher and higher, but politics is becoming more and more parochial' (Kanter and Castle 2016; Goodman and Kanter 2016). It has also become less popular, with more than 70 per cent of EU citizens reporting in 2013 'their voices do not count in EU decision-making' and nearly two-thirds declaring 'the EU does not understand the needs of its citizens' (Stokes 2014).

The demise of the Warsaw Pact

The disappearance of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact was a welcome development in the rest of Europe, but it also removed a frequently forgotten motivation for European unity. Although scholars and journalists often portray the EU as a purely economic and political project, security concerns were a key part of its rationale from the start (Rosato 2012). In particular, European leaders in the 1950s believed only a continental-scale economy could provide them with wherewithal to counter the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. Economic integration was also deemed necessary to prevent political rivalries from undermining the collective effort to keep communism from spreading. Together with NATO, therefore, European economic integration was an important component of the Western effort to contain Soviet expansion.

This security rationale faded as NATO become stronger and it disappeared entirely when the Soviet Union collapsed. The absence of a clear and present danger permitted Europe's leaders to focus more attention on individual national concerns and to devote less political capital to preserving the broader European project. EU members have repeatedly pledged to develop a 'common foreign and security policy', but they have never succeeded in doing so. The incoherent European responses to events in Ukraine or to the continuing refugee crisis are merely the latest illustrations of the lack of consensus among EU governments on important foreign policy issues.

The euro crisis

The third problem facing the EU today is the never-ending euro crisis. With hindsight, it is clear the decision to create the euro was a fateful error, as sceptics from across the political spectrum warned at the time (Feldstein 1997; Jonung and Drea 2009). European leaders established a common currency for political rather than economic reasons: to give new momentum to the broad goal of European unity, to bind a reunified Germany within a stronger set of European institutions, and to put Europe on a more equal footing with the United States.

Unfortunately, as the euro's critics emphasized, the EU did not possess the political and institutional mechanisms needed to make a currency union work over the longer term. Instead, the euro's proponents simply assumed eurozone members would abide by agreed-upon fiscal guidelines and never find themselves in serious financial trouble. As Joseph Joffe, the editor of *Die Zeit,* noted back in 1997, the euro tied the disparate national economies together like cars on a locomotive and assumed that all would run at the same speed and on the same track forever (Joffe 1997).

The euro's architects further assumed that if these assumptions proved to be too optimistic (as indeed they did), a future crisis would force the eurozone members to create the political and economic institutions they needed (e.g. common bank regulations, shared fiscal policy, a stronger central bank, and greater capacity to transfer resources from wealthy states to members in need of help). In other words, proponents acted like a Channel swimmer, assuming that if they ever found themselves at risk of drowning, a boat would magically appear and rescue them.

The global financial crisis in 2008 exposed this folly and the EU has been preoccupied with containing the damage ever since. More than eight years after the crisis began, top government officials and central bankers were still devoting countless hours to saving the common currency. They have made tentative steps toward creating slightly stronger economic institutions, but the EU is still light-years away from having the political institutions needed to sustain a genuine currency union. And if a Eurozone member ever exits—as one or more almost certainly will at some point—it will demonstrate that the euro is not irreversible and sow new doubts about its long-term prospects.

The economic costs of the euro crisis have been enormous, but the political costs are also substantial.

Every hour that Europe's leaders have spent trying to dig themselves out of this mess is an hour they could not devote to addressing China's rise, the problem of terrorism, the consequences of the so-called Arab spring, Russia's policy in Ukraine, or any number of important domestic issues. Even worse, the euro crisis produced deeper divisions within the continent itself, with debtors and creditors viewing each other with a level of resentment and hostility not seen for many years. Needless to say, this situation is not what the euro's creators had in mind when they took that fateful step.

A deteriorating regional environment

The EU is also buffeted by growing instability on its frontiers. State failures in Libya, Syria, Yemen, and parts of Africa have produced a growing flood of refugees seeking to enter the EU, while the emergence of al-Qaeda, the so-called Islamic State, and other extremist movements has had worrisome repercussions among a small fraction of Europe's Muslim population. While it is often exaggerated, the danger of home-grown or foreign-inspired terrorism is not zero, and the perception of danger has reinforced calls for new barriers to immigration and new limits on cross-border movements within Europe itself. Such fears undoubtedly reinforced the pro-Brexit sentiments in the United Kingdom as well. If adopted, limitations on cross-border movement would reverse the movement toward open borders that was one of the singular achievements of the 1986 Single European Act.

Last but not least, the continued violence in Ukraine and the Russian seizure of Crimea have raised new concerns about the security of the EU's eastern borders. Yet the EU's member states have repeatedly failed to agree on new measures to address any of these challenges, further underscoring the dysfunctional nature of contemporary EU decision making.

The refugee crisis

If the above challenges were not enough, in 2015 Europe suddenly faced an ever-growing flood of refugees fleeing the consequences of the 'Arab Spring' and especially the brutal civil war in Syria. By the end of 2015, more than 1.3 million people had applied for asylum in the EU, thousands had lost their lives attempting to flee the carnage, and the EU again found itself deeply divided over the best way to respond (Connor 2016). Although the total number of asylum seekers was less than 0.5 per cent of the EU population, public concerns about the issue strengthened right-wing, anti-EU parties across the continent and undermined previously unchallenged leaders such as the German chancellor Angela Merkel. The desire to assert greater national control over migration and citizenship also underlay much of the support for the pro-Brexit campaign in the United Kingdom.

The refugee and migration issue is not going to disappear—and could easily get worse—due to a fateful combination of demography and geography. Most Middle Eastern and sub-Saharan African countries have relatively young and rapidly expanding populations and weak economies that cannot support them. By 2050, Egypt's population will grow from 90 million to more than 150 million; Nigeria's will rise from 182 million to nearly 400 million; and Uganda and Ethiopia's will roughly double, to 101 million and 188 million respectively (United Nations Population Division 2015). Unlike the United States, Europe is not separated from Africa, the Middle East, or Central Asia by two enormous oceanic moats. A significant number of non-Europeans will continue trying to get there, some of them will succeed, and their presence will further fuel the xenophobia that is jeopardizing the EU itself.

The persistence of nationalism

Underlying many of the problems just discussed has been the persistence of nationalism and the re-emergence of particularly virulent manifestations of it. The elites who created and built the EU hoped that a broader 'European' identity would gradually supplant existing national loyalties and that EU citizens would eventually identify as Europeans first and as Germans, Danes, Italians, Belgians, Spaniards, etc. second. It is now clear that this transformation has not occurred and is unlikely to do so in the future.

If anything, public attitudes are headed the other way. As previously discussed, the euro crisis has exacerbated national tensions and European leaders have consistently emphasized national interests rather than the broader goal of European unity, even as they attempt to strengthen the EU's existing institutions (Moravcsik 1998).[5] Great Britain voted to leave the EU—marking the first decisive step backwards in the history of the European project—and resurgent nationalism could eventually lead Scotland to exit the United Kingdom. Powerful nationalist sentiments

continue to simmer in Catalonia and several other regions as well, and Euro-sceptic political movements have been growing throughout Europe, most notably in Hungary and Poland but in other countries as well.

Economic hardship and rising opposition to immigration have also fuelled a resurgence of extreme right-wing movements in many European states. These movements are hostile to the core principles upon which the EU is built and their growing popularity raises further doubts about the EU's long-term future. Add to this mix Europe's unfavourable demography—its population is declining and the median age is rising rapidly—and you have a recipe for continued economic stagnation and popular discontent. If these trends ever bring parties such as France's Front National to power, it will make it even harder for the EU to regain its former legitimacy and restore momentum for further integration.

KEY POINTS

- The European Union is facing multiple challenges.
- Overexpansion has made EU decision making extremely cumbersome.
- The demise of the Warsaw Pact removed a major motivation for unity.
- The Euro crisis intensified political divisions among EU members.
- Europe has not developed a united response to regional instability.
- Refugee flows from Africa and the Middle East have fuelled the growth of right-wing, xenophobic political parties and are likely to remain a problem.
- Nationalism remains the most powerful source of political identity in Europe.

Conclusion

The combination of shifting US priorities and protracted problems within Europe herald a steady and significant decline in the transatlantic partnership. Even if a sudden rupture—such as a US decision to formally leave NATO—is avoided, the United States and its European allies are likely to drift further apart, with states on each side of the Atlantic charting their own course.

This outcome is even more likely because there is little the United States can do to address the various challenges discussed previously in this chapter. This situation stands in marked contrast to earlier historical moments: US intervention tipped the balance of power in both world wars, and the Marshall Plan and NATO provided the means to rebuild Europe and contain Soviet power after 1945. But the United States cannot give Europe the institutions that could make the Euro work, help streamline the EU's sclerotic decision making, or render its institutions more legitimate with European publics. Nor can Washington mitigate the impact of resurgent nationalism or make Europe a less desirable destination for foreign refugees fleeing war or economic hardship. And even if it could do a few things that might help at the margin (such as taking in more refugees itself), it is not going to do enough to make a serious dent in the problem, and especially not while Donald Trump is president. The adroit application of American power helped Europe address several earlier crises, but that will not be the case in the future.

To be sure, the two sides of the Atlantic will continue to collaborate in several areas of common interest. Transatlantic trade and investment will not end, and could even increase if the long-delayed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership is somehow resurrected and implemented. Western states will continue to share intelligence and coordinate counter-terrorism policy, and formal diplomatic coordination will undoubtedly occur when interests align (as they did in the nuclear negotiations with Iran). To say that transatlantic ties will erode is not to say that they will end.

One can also imagine several scenarios that might give the transatlantic alliance a new lease on life. If China stumbles badly and no longer poses a hegemonic challenge in Asia, there will be less need for the United States to rebalance its commitments toward Asia and more time and attention could be devoted to Europe.[6] If worst-case predictions about Russian assertiveness turn out to be true and Moscow begins to actively threaten one or more NATO members, concerns about US credibility might resurface and the European balance of power might be rejuvenated. If Europe's leaders rediscover the will and creativity to overcome the various crises they are now facing, a transatlantic partnership of equals might eventually emerge and rescue the West's liberal vision for world politics.[7]

None of these reassuring scenarios is likely, however, and especially under a Trump administration. China may stumble, but its relative power is likely to keep rising for the forseeable future. Russian power is destined to decline (and especially if energy prices

remain low), and this situation will confine Moscow to a spoiler role in the years to come. One could even imagine a concerted US effort to court Moscow at Europe's expense, in order to draw Russia away from China. Lastly, there are no European leaders on the scene today with the vision and stature of a Konrad Adenauer, Charles de Gaulle, or even Margaret Thatcher, and the EU's elaborate governance structures would make any serious reform effort a long and torturous process. For all of these reasons, the most likely outcome is continued paralysis in Europe and a progressive erosion of transatlantic ties.

If this gloomy forecast is correct, what should the United States and its European partners do? One option is to pretend that nothing is wrong, invent new missions for NATO to perform (badly), and assume that the transatlantic partnership is a permanent fixture in world affairs. This has been the default response for the past two decades, but that experience shows that it is a recipe for continued disappointment. If Europeans and Americans continue to assume that their foreign policies must proceed in lock-step, there will be constant complaints that the other side is not living up to expectations and the danger of more serious rifts will grow.

The wiser course, therefore, is to lower expectations, concentrate on areas where US and European interests still align, and prepare for a future in which Europe no longer enjoys a special position in America's global outlook.[8] For the United States, it means relaxing the tight rein it has held over Europe since the Second World War and turning European security back over to the Europeans. As Barry Posen has suggested, a good first step might be to let a European serve as Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, instead of reserving that role exclusively for Americans (Posen 2014). For Europe, it means giving up the comforting belief that Uncle Sam will always ride to the rescue when trouble looms, and that Washington continue to bear a disproportionate share of responsibility for European security. The good news is that Europe has the latent capacity to defend its collective interests without extensive US support. Whether its members will summon the unity and shared purpose to do so, however, is very much in doubt. (For further discussion, see Major debates and their impacts 23.1 and Controversies 23.1.)

MAJOR DEBATES AND THEIR IMPACTS 23.1: NATO EXPANSION

Was the decision to expand NATO after the Cold War a farsighted act of statesmanship or a major strategic blunder? Advocates of expansion, such as US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke, believed that extending the alliance eastward would strengthen the post-Soviet democracies in Eastern Europe, dampen local rivalries, and create an ever-expanding 'zone of peace' that would prevent a new division of Europe. By contrast, critics warned that NATO's new members were not vital strategic interests, believed expansion would jeopardize relations with a newly democratic Russia, and worried that expansion would commit the rest of NATO to defending a number of weak and vulnerable states that did not add much to the alliance's wealth, power, or military capability. The entry of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic in 1999 proceeded without incident, but the inclusion of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and Slovakia in 2004 and discussions over a possible future accession of Georgia and Ukraine eventually triggered a harsh reaction from Moscow and sparked the Russo-Georgian war of 2008 and the seizure of Crimea in 2014. The pessimists' fears appeared to have been confirmed, but controversy still reigns over whether expansion was the right decision or whether a more inclusive arrangement might have preserved more amicable relations with Russia and enhanced European security even more.

CONTROVERSIES 23.1: BURDEN-SHARING IN NATO

Is Europe 'free-riding' on Uncle Sam? During the 2016 presidential campaign, Donald Trump accused America's European allies of not paying their fair share of NATO expenditures and said 'the countries we are defending must pay for the cost of this defense'. NATO's European members have repeatedly pledged to do more, but agreed-upon targets have rarely been met and European states still spend a smaller share of GDP on defence than the United States does. But what can the United States do to elicit a greater contribution from its allies? If it threatens to withdraw from the alliance, it risks losing much of its influence in Europe and opening the door to renewed conflict there. But if the United States remains strongly committed to NATO and ready to intervene if necessary, why should its allies do significantly more to provide for their own defence?

QUESTIONS

1. Why has the United States sought to prevent any single power from establishing hegemony in Europe, if necessary by force? What is the strategic rationale behind this policy?
2. Why did the United States decide not to withdraw from Europe after the Second World War, as it had after the First World War? Why did it subsequently take on a formal commitment to defend Europe, and keep several hundred thousand troops there on a semi-permanent basis?
3. Is NATO an example of the balance of power at work, a reflection of shared democratic values, or some combination of the two? Which features have been most important over time?
4. After four decades attempting to build an 'ever-closer union,' the nations of Europe face multiple challenges today. What are the main problems that have cast doubt on the EU's long-term future?
5. Why did the United States remove most of its military forces from Europe in the early 1990s, and why is it now shifting more of its strategic attention to Asia?
6. If the United States and China become intense rivals, what role is Europe likely to play in this competition?
7. Are there any plausible steps that could be taken to reinvigorate NATO and reinforce US ties with Europe? How likely would they be to succeed?

FURTHER READING

Anderson, J., Ikenberry, G. J., and Risse, T. (eds) (2008), *The End of the West? Crisis and Change in the Atlantic Order* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).

A prescient collection of essays anticipating and dissecting the structural tensions within the transatlantic alliance.

Carpenter, T. G. (ed.) (1998), *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality* (Washington, DC: CATO Institute).

A sceptical look at NATO expansion from a libertarian perspective.

Goldgeier, J. (1999), *Not Whether But When: The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO* (Washington, DC: Brooking Institution).

Well-researched, sympathetic account of the US-led effort to expand NATO.

Kopstein, J. and Steinmo, S. (eds) (2008), *Growing Apart? America and Europe in the 21st Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

A collection of essays that attributes splits within the transatlantic community to broad social and political forces rather than the policies of particular governments or the decisions of individual leaders.

Michta, A. A. and Hilde, P. S. (eds) (2014), *The Future of NATO: Regional Defense and Global Security* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press).

A collection of essays from a group of European authors that takes a somewhat optimistic view of NATO's future.

Thies, W. J. (2009), *Why NATO Endures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

A thoughtful study suggesting that NATO's shared democratic character gives it greater resilience and durability than earlier alliances.

ENDNOTES

1. During most of the Cold War, for example, serving in Europe was an optimal career path for ambitious military officers seeking to rise within the army, navy, or air force. Today, experience in Iraq, Afghanistan, or Asia would be a more reliable path to professional advancement.
2. By making war in Europe effectively impossible, America's role there also diminished European fears about the risks of economic integration and thus served as an important permissive condition behind the expansion and deepening of the EU.
3. The best mainstream accounts of this liberal order are Ikenberry 2000; 2011.
4. Although the EU officially maintains its post–Tiananmen Square embargo on the sale of military weaponry to China, the EU member states interpret the ban in different ways and European manufacturers have provided China with a variety of products with direct military applications, such as the German diesel-electric engines that power a number of Chinese submarines (Hancock 2014).
5. This behavior is not new; earlier steps to build stronger institutions also involved bargains between competing state interests.
6. For an optimistic analysis along these lines see Beckley 2011/2012.
7. On the current crisis of liberalism see Walt 2016.
8. Twenty years ago, I observed: 'nothing is permanent in international affairs, and NATO's past achievements should not blind us to its growing fragility. Instead of mindlessly extending guarantees to every potential trouble spot, and instead of basing our foreign policy on a presumption of permanent partnership, it is time for Europe and the United States to begin a slow and gradual process of disengagement. This is going to happen anyway, and wise statecraft anticipates and exploits the tides of history rather than engaging in a fruitless struggle to hold them back' (Walt 1998/1999).

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The future of US foreign policy

Anatol Lieven

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Introduction

This chapter analyses and portrays possible futures for US foreign policy on the basis of long-established patterns, and in terms of the interests and ideology of the US elites (and to a lesser extent the population at large), the structures of US political life, the real or perceived national interests of the US, the increasingly troubled US domestic scene, and future developments on the world stage, especially concerning the rise of China and the instability of the Muslim world.

On this basis, this chapter suggests that there will not be a fundamental change in US global strategy whichever of the two dominant political parties is in power, since both share the same basic view of US goals internationally and are subject to the same constraints by the essentially bipartisan foreign and security elites. In particular, the rise in the power of the US uniformed military has led to them playing a central role in both the Obama and the Trump presidencies and to ensuring continuity in defence of America's global power. The power of the military is bolstered not only by its huge share of the national budget and the key role of the military-industrial complex in maintaining US high-technology advantages but also by opinion ratings placing respect for the military vastly ahead of that for any other US institution.

This essential continuity has now been demonstrated twice: by the failure of the Obama administration seriously to change the course of US foreign and security policy, despite all the hopes for change invested in Obama when he came to power; and by the failure of President

Trump to reduce US international commitments, despite the radical promises in this regard made during his election campaign.

The two exceptions to this pattern of continuity are in trade and climate change. Very few ordinary Americans know or care much about most areas of foreign and security policy (except for those engaged in specific lobbies such as the Israeli or Armenian) and are content to leave their conduct to the elites. By contrast, action against climate change and the effects of trade openness are areas where very strong domestic interests, passions, and ideologies are fiercely engaged and the influence and interest of the military is limited. These issues are therefore affected by the bitter polarization of US domestic politics, a polarization that has not yet extended to the essentially bipartisan foreign and security elites. Over trade and climate change, therefore, Trump has been able to make radical changes to Obama's policies, and this radical alternation between administrations will remain the case in future.

Despite Trump's often provocative rhetoric, this chapter argues that as a result of the extremely costly wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the disastrous intervention in Libya, US foreign policy will continue to be more cautious when it comes to planning radical actions and major interventions, but will not necessarily become wiser. Interventionism will be replaced by drift, until some major global crisis occurs to upset the entire present international order. The sheer number and volatility of issues and areas around the world in which the US establishment considers that vital US interests are involved means that the potential for crisis will remain high.

The analysis of possible futures of US foreign policy set out in this chapter will be based on a combination of elements from two different traditions in international relations analysis: the realist tradition, which focuses above all on state interests and the relative power of states, and what in German is called the *Primat der Innenpolitik*, the predominant influence of domestic policy on foreign policy. Domestic policy in this sense is defined not just as domestic political agendas and ambitions, but the constitutional, political, economic, social, and ideological structures of the domestic political order.

Realism dictates that many US 'vital national interests' must at present be regarded as givens, even though historians of the future may see them as not really in the interest of the great majority of Americans. This is because they are defined as vital, unchangeable interests by the great majority of the US political classes, the security establishment, and the media. I argue here that the leaderships of the Republican and Democratic parties are to a great extent drawn from the same US establishment, share the same basic class interests, are subject to the same domestic pressures on key issues, and are shaped by the same nationalist and imperialist ideology, in somewhat different forms.

So far, attempts from both the left and right of the political spectrum to redraw US interests in much more limited terms have mainly been defeated: Bernie Sanders was defeated in the 2016 Democratic Party primaries (with the vast majority of the Democratic foreign and security establishment backing Hillary Clinton); in the case of Donald Trump, the would-be 'isolationist' elements in his administration have been subsumed or removed by the so-called 'grown-ups', professional members of the bipartisan security elites drawn overwhelmingly from the US military (Khalaf 2017; Yakubovski 2017). This being so, it is likely that future US foreign policy will share the same basic contours whether the Republicans or Democrats form the administration at the time.

US administrations will also face certain irreducible constraints and imperatives stemming from US external interests, the international balance of power, and the extent of US power or the lack of it. US power (like that of any other state), to be assessed accurately, has to be judged not in absolute terms—total US military spending, the numbers of US aircraft carriers and warplanes, the size of the US economy and so on—but in terms of the US power that can actually be mobilized domestically behind a given objective, and applied locally, to a particular place or issues, relative to the power that other states can bring to bear on the same place or issue.

Viewed in these terms, US foreign policy for the foreseeable future will be chiefly defined by two desires: the desire of the US political elites, and a large part of US public opinion in general, for the US to play a hegemonic role on the world stage, and their equally profound desire, as individuals, not personally to pay or fight to maintain this role. This unwillingness has been increased still further since 2008 by the continuing economic decline of large sections of the US middle and working classes. The US is in fact facing its own version of the experience of previous empires entering on their period of decadence: led by the elites, the population starts evading both military service

and taxes. The difference is that in the case of the US this behaviour is perfectly legal, as in the case of tax cuts—but it is no less damaging to US power.

This creates a severe mismatch between American ambitions and the American power actually to achieve them. The problems stemming from this mismatch are likely to be made considerably worse by the rise of China as a global rival to US power, with Russia, Iran, and even India also competing in different ways in their own regions. In these circumstances, it would seem obvious for the US to seek to redraw its priorities (or at least choose between them) and reduce its commitments in certain parts of the world that are not in fact central to US vital interests—the strategy pursued by Britain in the generation before 1914. However, this is not easy for any empire and it is especially difficult for the United States because of the increasingly fractured condition of its domestic political system.

It is indeed in the image of its political system, rather than its geopolitical power, that the USA has suffered the most drastic decline in recent years. For many decades, the prestige of US democracy, and US democratic institutions, was (together with the image of the USA as being at the cutting edge of modernity and economic growth) a key foundation of US 'soft power' in the world. In recent years, however, not only has this soft power been diminished by the bitter polarization of US politics, the paralysis of government action that this often produces, and the unpredictable and disturbing tweets of President Trump; but the US Constitution itself is becoming seen as increasingly dysfunctional. The election of Trump with a minority of the popular vote, the effective gerrymandering of the House of Representatives, the unelected power of the Supreme Court, and the ability of minorities in the Senate to block legislation have all been grist to the propaganda mills of authoritarian regimes around the world, and especially in Russia and China. Together with the growth of right-wing populism in Europe, this suggests that the era of liberal democratic ideological hegemony in the world may be drawing to a close.

The ideological roots of US foreign policy

The great majority of Americans do not believe that they have or should have an empire. At the same time, however, a sense of America's mission to bring democracy, freedom, and progress to the rest of the world is deeply rooted in American culture, and deeply entwined with American civic nationalism. It is connected to a widespread sense of the innate goodness of America's actions on the world stage, and of the US military in particular. This in turn goes to strengthen an intense nationalist pride in American power. Episodes casting doubt on this image—for example, the atrocities committed during the Vietnam War—are largely erased from public memory, not by state decision but through a sort of subconsciously willed collective amnesia (McNeill 1986; Baritz 1986: 349–50).

This is a key link between the ideological bases of American civic nationalism (based on general belief in the values of what has been called 'the American Creed') and American imperialism. Insofar as they can use this rhetoric in support of their plans, the imperialists have a tremendous means of seduction as far as many Americans are concerned. This is America's version of the missions of the great civilizational empires of the past: of the duties of Rome and imperial China—as seen by their rulers, elites, and intellectuals—to spread their civilizations to the barbarians beyond their borders, of the Spanish to Christianize the New World, of the *missions civilisatrices* of the nineteenth-century European empires, of the Soviet Union to bring the light of communism to the rest of humanity.

In the words of Russell Nye:

> "All nations … have long agreed that they are chosen peoples; the idea of special destiny is as old as nationalism itself. However, no nation in modern history has been quite so consistently dominated as the United States by the belief that it has a particular mission in the world."

(Nye 1966, quoted in Cobb 1998: 4)

So powerful is this form of nationalism, and so continuously reinforced in the US by the media, popular culture in general, much of the school system, many of the churches, and the rhetoric of politicians, that it survived what should have been the searing lessons of Vietnam, and will probably survive what ought to be the equally searing lessons of Iraq. It played a key part in the rhetoric of the Bush administration in the 'war on terror'. This ideological nationalism also, however, profoundly influences most of the leadership and established intelligentsia of the Democratic Party, including those who call themselves liberal internationalists. Louis Hartz wrote of the American Creed's

'compulsive nationalism' and the 'fixed, dogmatic liberalism of a liberal way of life' (Hartz 1955: 9, 15, 175, 225–37). One result of this ideological conformity is to make it much more difficult for most Americans to imagine America as a country among others, or an international community that includes America as a member rather than a hegemon.[1]

As a result of this complex of factors, in the view of Andrew Bacevich, the basic American consensus on foreign policy 'is so deep-seated that its terms have become all but self-evident, its premises asserted rather than demonstrated'. As a result, much of the public and media debate on international issues within the US is no more than 'political theatre' (Bacevich 2002: 9, 33).

The effects of this ideology and this conformism are twofold. Overall, it is extremely difficult within the US establishment to question whether the US actually needs to remain the sole global superpower, with all the immense costs and risks that this involves. In specific regions and on specific issues, it makes it much more difficult to propose reasonable compromises with local great powers because this can always be presented as 'appeasement' and 'betraying American values'. As the example of Bacevich and others show, it is of course possible to put forward these ideas in the US—but the general result is to be excluded from the establishment, and to a great extent from the mainstream media.

In the wider US population, things are rather different. There is a widespread, semi-conscious sense that after all, the USA is protected by two oceans, is not actually situated in the regions where the US has become committed, and can therefore pull back from them. This makes the USA very different from the great majority of states around the world. Russian, Chinese, and Indian security engagements are in their immediate peripheries or countries that are reasonably close. Since the fall of the British and French empires, only the USSR has allotted itself a global role comparable to that of the USA, and this too was for ideological reasons.

These mass sentiments in the USA (pejoratively dubbed 'isolationist' by the US establishment) naturally tend to rise at times of domestic economic hardship and insecurity, and have been reflected in mass support for both Trump and Sanders. The fact that—for the first time in American history—this hardship is becoming not temporary but permanent as far as the middle classes are concerned means that this 'isolationist' sentiment is also likely to become not an episodic but a permanent feature of the political scene. However, not only is 'isolationism' rigorously shunned by the US establishment, but its proponents are divided between two bitterly opposed political-cultural camps: the socialist left, and the 'Jacksonian' right. Both believe that US resources are better spent at home and that the USA must be protected economically against globalization, but the Jacksonians associate this with a hostility to immigration and suspect internal minorities, positions that are anathema to the left.

KEY POINTS

- The US public debate on foreign policy takes place within a framework of exceptionally strong civic nationalist myths about America's uniquely good institutions and mission. These myths limit how far Americans can think frankly and deeply about their country and its international role.
- This includes a commitment to military spending vastly in excess of any potential rival, and a military presence in a number of key areas of the world.
- So far, attempts from both right and left to change US foreign policy radically have therefore failed. The only exceptions are in the areas of climate change and international trade, where—unlike in other areas of foreign policy—the passions of ordinary Americans are strongly engaged.

Key contemporary challenges for US foreign policy

Relations with China

The United States obviously possesses tremendous latent strength, as both the world's largest economy and the world's greatest military power by far. However, China's economic growth is rapidly eroding America's lead. This has been most strikingly the case since the economic crisis of 2008–9. To judge by this Chinese achievement, and the previous East Asian examples of Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea—and barring the collapse of Communist Party rule or an international war—high Chinese growth rates relative to those of the USA may well continue for another two decades or more. If so, and unless US growth can recover to levels not seen for many years, the Chinese economy will

surpass that of the US by 2030 (by most estimates it already does so in terms of purchasing power parity). This would be a development of truly epochal significance, reversing the global economic trend not only of the past 150 years of US economic supremacy but of the past 400 years of Western global domination. Adapting and reacting to China's rise will be the biggest challenge facing US statespeople in the first half of the twenty-first century and perhaps beyond.

Managing such a shift in the balance of power requires immense reserves of caution and restraint in both countries concerned. Unfortunately, on the Chinese side strategy in the South China Sea suggests that as Chinese power grows, so will Chinese assertiveness when it comes to Chinese territorial claims and regional influence. Particularly striking has been the extent of militant nationalism in the mass of the Chinese educated population, revealed through the internet and the blogosphere.

On the US side, President Trump has articulated the depth of anger among many Americans at what they see as China's use of unfair trade practices to undermine the US economy and destroy US jobs. However, Trump's first move on the trade front was to pull out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA), a trade bloc designed by the Obama administration specifically to exclude China and limit Chinese influence. This indicates how difficult it is to render the feelings of the US public about international economics into coherent geopolitical strategies that will not undermine ties with US allies. On other issues between the USA and China (North Korea's nuclear programme, relations with Taiwan, and the disputed islands of the South China Sea), under the bluster, the record of the Trump administration in its first months in office followed closely that of previous administrations, Democrat and Republican—a sign that while on the one hand the US security establishment is very unwilling to make serious changes to US strategy towards China, it also understands its constraints.

It should of course be recognized that in terms of pure military power, even a China which has passed the US economically is unlikely to be able to project anything like the same degree of global might. For example, as of 2011 China is only beginning to develop aircraft carrier capacity, and as past Soviet experience shows, this is something which it takes a very long time to develop from scratch. In China's own region, however, US military power is likely to become more and more eclipsed. A particular threat to the US presence is China's development of ballistic anti-ship missiles and—a more distant potential—swarms of drones, which could make it impossible for US aircraft carriers to operate within effective striking distance of China's coast. That would render US security guarantees to Taiwan meaningless.

On the other hand, the US does possess other strategic assets in the region which may even be strengthened by China's rise. These are the US alliances with Japan and South Korea, and security relationships with Southeast Asian states. The rise of China, and Chinese territorial claims to disputed islands and their surrounding seas, are driving at least some of these countries closer to the US, guaranteeing Washington military bases and therefore a set of unsinkable aircraft carriers in the region.

Such alliances, however, pose a serious danger for the USA: that US backing will lead allies to take a tougher line in their disputes with China than they would otherwise have done, potentially leading to local conflicts. A US administration would then be forced either to abandon its ally and suffer loss of prestige (and domestic political humiliation), or back its ally and risk being drawn into war with China. The classic example of this is the way in which Serbia was emboldened by Russian backing to take a hard line against Austria-Hungary in the years before 1914, leading to the First World War.

A much smaller and less catastrophic case was the way in which apparent (but informal) US security commitments encouraged the Georgian government of Mikhail Saakishvili to attack Russian peacekeepers in South Ossetia in August 2008. On that occasion, the Bush administration backed away and allowed the Georgian forces to be crushed. This would be much more difficult, however, if the adversary were China and the credibility of the entire US international alliance system were on the line. The range of territorial disputes between China and its neighbours—Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and most importantly India—makes this a threat that cannot be ignored. Growing US closeness to India is also driving Pakistan even closer to China, increasing the risk that a new India–Pakistan clash might draw in first China and then the USA.

US military power

Apart from the changing military balance with China, elsewhere in the world the problem for the US, then,

is not its absolute strength, but the twin questions of how to bring that strength to bear on particular issues and, even more importantly, how to persuade the American political classes and population actually to mobilize that strength for foreign policy goals.

The US military themselves should not be seen as aggressive and warmongering in the style of pre-1914 European militaries. They are of course absolutely committed to US global power and when already involved in wars like Iraq and Afghanistan, the US military are naturally determined to win them, or perhaps more accurately not to be seen to lose them. But the attack on Iraq was the work of civilian officials, not the uniformed military, much of which was highly sceptical about the operation (see Key quotes 24.1).

KEY QUOTES 24.1: SENDING IN THE ARMY

In my opinion, any future defense secretary who advises the president to again send a big American land army into Asia or into the Middle East or Africa should 'have his head examined,' as General MacArthur so delicately put it.

(Robert Gates, US Defense Secretary under both G. W. Bush and Obama: speech at West Point Military Academy, 24 February 2011)

The uniformed military and US intelligence played a major part in blocking a US attack on Iran during the last year of the Bush administration, fearing the massive, unpredictable, and open-ended conflict that might result. They also backed Defense Secretary Robert Gates in categorically rejecting even the suggestion of military action against Russia in 2008. Above all, the senior ranks of the military deeply fear any new prolonged ground conflict, seeing that this would impose crushing burdens on their budgets and recruitment. Some are even beginning to return to Eisenhower's recognition that the true underlying strength of a country lies more in its economy and fiscal stability than in its military. Finally, the military are well aware that in almost no circumstances will the US public agree to a reintroduction of conscription. The spectre of Vietnam is something of which the US generals are well aware.

The contrast between a desire for imperial glory and an unwillingness to pay or fight for empire is not new in Western history. The British and French empires were conquered very much on the cheap, often largely by native auxiliaries recruited and paid for by the colonies themselves. The outrageous cost (by previous imperial standards) of the Boer War brought about a major revulsion of public feeling in Britain.

Until the First World War, the British had always rejected conscription. Concern about the deaths of British conscript soldiers in colonial wars was one reason for the speed with which British empire was wound up in the 1950s. The French did have conscription, but this was restricted to service in metropolitan France, and was legitimized to the French public as necessary to fight in Europe, in the defence of France herself. Hence the creation of the Foreign Legion, explicitly for imperial campaigns.

The suggestion that the US lacks the military power to conduct a successful strategy of world hegemony may seem absurd in the face of US military spending that as of 2017 is still four times that of China and larger than that of the next five powers put together. However, military and geopolitical power and influence are not abstract things. In the end, all true power is local, and relative: as we have said, it is power that can actually be brought to bear on a particular place or a particular issue, relative to the power that can be brought to bear on the same place and issue by another power or powers.

Moreover, in concentrating on US military spending, on US high technology, and on the number of US aircraft carriers, warplanes, and tanks, military analysts have too often forgotten an older, but still extremely important, measure of military strength: the number of 'bayonets' an army possesses, in other words, the number of its fighting infantry. This too is an old dilemma for western empires, as Kipling noted in his poem 'Frontier Arithmetic'.

As the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrate, while conquering a territory may well require comparatively few troops, holding it afterwards, protecting a client government in the face of local revolt, and ensuring basic local stability require very large numbers indeed—numbers which probably cannot be generated in the long term, or for multiple such operations, without a resort to conscription (Robberson 2007).

The rise of international terrorism as a threat has greatly increased interest in punitive strategies, but has also made them much more problematical. Punitive action always brought with it the risk that rather than coercing the state concerned, it would lead to its collapse. This indeed was the eventual result, in 1911, of seventy years of humiliation of the Manchu

Dynasty in China by Western powers. Collapse may be followed either by the appearance of a new, even more hostile, regime or by anarchy; either may be seen to necessitate the direct intervention and rule of the imperial power.

The US political order and foreign policy

The difficulty the US has in mobilizing its wealth for foreign policy goals is shown most glaringly in the area of foreign aid. During the Cold War, both Democratic and Republican administrations saw aid as an absolutely critical part of US strategy in the struggle against communism. Since the end of that conflict, spending on aid has declined precipitously, and the aftermath of 9/11 has led to no really significant improvement, even in most of the Muslim world.[2] In 2011, the Republicans in Congress tried to impose deep cuts in the foreign aid budget as part of their programme of reducing the deficit and diminishing 'big government'.

The foreign aid that the Obama administration was seeking was only $56 billion—around one-ninth of America's military budget. The prestige of foreign aid within the US system has worsened in recent years because of the massive shift of resources and influence from the State Department (including USAID) to the Pentagon. This reflects not only administration but Congressional priorities. Congress will not pay much any longer to build up countries such as Pakistan, which may emerge as economic competitors of the US in particular fields, as South Korea and Taiwan did during the Cold War. They will pay for the military, not only because of security paranoia or the allure of military 'pork' for their own states, but because more broadly the US military budget serves as something that according to its free market ideology, the US does not have: a massive, and in some areas extremely successful, programme of state-subsidized industrial development, heavily slanted towards high technology. The reduction of funding for both foreign aid and the State Department has accelerated under the Trump administration, to a point where both the effectiveness of US diplomacy abroad and its influence on policy at home are seriously diminished.

The militarization of the structures of US foreign policy naturally means that more and more of America's significant diplomatic contacts with key states will be military-to-military, and that less aid will be for development and more is likely to be security related, or at best humanitarian aid administered by the US military, as after the Asian tsunami and the Pakistan earthquake.

The severe limits on foreign assistance have been especially striking on America's own continent. In Central America and the Caribbean, economic stagnation and the transfer of the cocaine trade from Colombia (a malign but inevitable consequence of the US 'war on drugs' in the region) has led to a degree of organized criminal violence in México, Guatemala, and elsewhere that is crippling these states and encouraging illegal migration to the USA. As of 2017 the US seems both impotent and curiously indifferent in the face of this emerging threat, which prior to the First World War would have been seen as *the* priority of US foreign and security policy. Instead, the most radical action proposed by a US president since the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 has been President Trump's promise to build a wall along the Mexican border in an effort to isolate the USA from the crisis to its south.

The inability to generate increased foreign aid reflects the unwillingness of US taxpayers to provide the funds, but also profound structural problems in the US political system, which make it extremely difficult to carry out any radical change of policy—even one supported by a majority of the population and the establishment—if this is opposed by even one really powerful lobby or interest group. From this point of view, the inability to raise spending on foreign aid, the inability fully to end the utterly counterproductive forty-year-old embargo against Cuba, the return of hostility to Iran and Shiism even in the face of a whole series of attacks on the West by Sunni extremist groups that are also bitterly anti-Shi'a, the pursuit of pointless and dangerous anti-Russian agendas, and unconditional support for Israel all find their echoes in certain domestic failures, for example the inability to reform America's horribly costly and inefficient private health system or to introduce restrictions on gun sales, despite the existence of large national majorities in favour of these reforms.

The power of small but determined lobbies is favoured by a number of factors: broad-church political parties with little central party leadership or direction; Senators who are enabled by this and by the constitution to act as virtually autonomous political princes in Washington politics; the need for larger and larger sums in order to fight elections, above all for television advertising; and presidential elections which

increasingly hinge on a small number of evenly divided states, making the votes of every lobby count.

Perhaps the single most important factor of all is the apathy of the wider public, which makes it extremely difficult to mobilize large numbers of people behind any broad programme of reform. If this is impossible when it comes to gun control, how much more difficult it would seem to get masses of Americans to demand radical shifts in policies towards foreign countries of which most know nothing. As a result, US foreign policy will for the foreseeable future be run by a mixture of an unrepresentative security elite deeply attached to its own agendas and interests (a pattern very familiar in the history of many states in the past) and particular lobby groups with no concern for the wider national interest at all. It is not just difficult to change course radically with such a system: it is often difficult to steer any rational and coherent course at all.

KEY POINTS

- The United States seems set for a prolonged period of economic stagnation, which will undermine American power and influence in the world.
- This decline is being made worse by the dysfunction of the US political system and America's inability to generate funds for international aid even to vital allies.
- Barring severe domestic upheaval in China, that country will overtake the United States in terms of real GDP some time in the 2020s. Since Chinese power projection capacity will remain limited, this is unlikely to lead to China challenging the US in the wider world, but it will definitely lead to greater Chinese assertiveness in its own region.
- The United States civilian establishment has very little idea of how to respond to this challenge.
- Even in the event of major terrorist attacks on the United States, new wars of invasion and occupation are highly unlikely. Punitive strikes, however, may only increase terrorism.

Future foreign policies

On the basis of the above, we can predict with reasonable confidence that for a long time to come most of the basic contours of US foreign policy will remain the same, under both Republican and Democratic administrations. An unkind summary of the most likely course of US foreign policy is that in the wake of the debacle in Iraq, it will become more cautious without necessarily becoming any wiser.

For US foreign policy to change radically would require a revolutionary shift in the US domestic political and economic systems, the international balance of power, or most likely both simultaneously. In a few generations, such a revolutionary change is extremely probable as the impact of global warming undermines many of the basic structures of international order. Long before that, it also seems probable that a really severe global economic recession will destroy many of the assumptions on which American power and the international system are now based. When this will happen is, however, impossible to predict with any certainty. The recession which began in 2008 has done severe damage, especially to US economic power vis-à-vis China, but it has not so far crippled US power.

The rest of this chapter will therefore deal only with US policy over the next generation, not the next century. It will be based on the assumption that during that period, the world situation will continue to develop roughly along existing lines, or at least within the parameters of presently recognized alternatives, for example either that China will continue to grow in wealth and power until it becomes a serious global rival to the US or that it will suffer a severe setback from some combination of political and economic factors.

In that context, the most important features of US foreign policy are likely to remain those discussed in the following sections: the Middle East; the Far East; Russia; Europe and the transatlantic relationship; climate change; and international trade.

The Middle East

At some point in the (probably distant) future the US will no doubt cease to be dependent on oil for transport and energy. Until this comes to pass, however, the US establishment will see vital US interests as lying in a maintenance of the open flow of oil from the Persian Gulf, at reasonable prices.

The price, and not the oil itself, is the reason for this interest. The development of fracking has made the USA to a considerable extent independent in energy terms; and the remaining imported US oil comes from Canada and Latin America. However, Gulf supplies are essential to world supplies and therefore to

the world market price and the state of the world economy. The fact that oil sales are demarcated in dollars is also a significant part of US global economic hegemony. The only alternative to dependence on the world market would be a strategy of controlling the oil at source through outright conquest and military occupation, or some form of locked-in relationship of patronage and defence with a local government.

Such a strategy may have partly underlain the decision to invade Iraq. It was discussed by the Nixon administration with regard to the Saudi oilfields during the first oil shock of 1973, and this possibility has been raised again in neo-conservative circles in recent years. Contingency plans to this effect certainly exist in the Pentagon. However, the miserable example of the US occupation of Iraq, and the endless conflict in Afghanistan, will for a considerable time to come act as a deterrent to further military occupations. More likely is continued strong military and political commitment to key oil producers, led of course by Saudi Arabia.

This tie to Saudi Arabia was strongly demonstrated in the first months of the Trump administration, encouraged further by Riyadh's role as the greatest purchaser of US armaments.

Just as there is no sign that the US will seriously reduce its dependence on oil in the near to medium term, so the bipartisan US political elite seems locked into support for Israel, to the exclusion of any real possibility of a genuine peace settlement with the Palestinians, the Arab world, or Iran (see Controversies 24.1). If the twin triumphs of the disappearance of the enemy Soviet superpower and the defeat of Iraq at the start of the 1990s could not persuade most Israelis that it was safe to make peace, then nothing will. And if the shock of 9/11 could not persuade the present US elites that it was necessary to put real pressure on Israel for the sake of better relations with the Muslim world, then nothing will.

The growing closeness between Israel, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt—grounded in mutual fear of Islamist popular revolution and mutual hatred of Iran—greatly reduces any US incentive to put pressure on Israel. This de facto alliance was reflected in the boycott of Qatar (home to a very important US military base) by these three Arab states in 2017, a considerable embarrassment to the USA which it was however powerless to prevent.

We can equally confidently predict that the US will not achieve most of its key objectives in the greater Middle East, whether in terms of eliminating Islamist extremism as a serious threat, bringing about the acceptance of Israel by the Muslim states, bringing popular acceptance of US hegemony, or bringing peace to Syria on US terms. It will have to live with a greatly strengthened Iran, and a much greater role for Russia in the region.

Most likely seems to be a kind of long-term US holding action, in which the US will suffer a constant drain on its manpower, resources, and international prestige, without coming under the kind of pressure that will force it from the region altogether or draw it into a general regional war. Disastrous scenarios—such as a US war with Iran or intervention in Pakistan—do, however, exist, and will be examined briefly towards the end of this chapter.

For the further future, one critical question for US strategy in the Middle East is whether the US remains the only international superpower with major influence in the region, as it has been since the collapse of the Soviet Union (or even, by some estimates, since Egypt changed geopolitical sides under Anwar Sadat more than thirty years ago).

China is obviously the most likely contender for such a role, driven by a thirst for oil, but India suffers the same thirst, and Russia retains a certain residual strength (especially through relations with Iran and Syria). Moscow seems to be working cautiously towards the possible of an international gas cartel on the model of OPEC, although its ability actually to achieve this will depend on the spread of liquid natural gas technology and a very considerable reduction in its cost as compared to the cost of fixed pipelines.

CONTROVERSIES 24.1: THE ISRAEL LOBBY

In March 2006 Professors John Mearsheimer (University of Chicago) and Stephen Walt (Harvard) published an essay in the London Review of Books entitled 'The Israel Lobby', strongly criticizing the role of that lobby in shaping US policy towards the Middle East and suppressing free debate of the issue in the US. Although their essay was unexceptionable by European standards, and certainly not anti-Semitic, the authors were subjected to a storm of criticism in the US. (This is discussed further in Chapter 12.)

The Far East

If China does adopt this role, it will also have a severe impact on wider relations with the US. By twenty years from now, these will in any case be largely shaped by competition for increasingly scarce resources, including not only oil and liquid natural gas but also grain and paper. As Chinese power grows, it seems likely that the spirit of 'China's Peaceful Rise' (as the official slogan has it) will be progressively abandoned, and China will become increasingly assertive in pursuit of its interests in the Far East and possibly beyond. This will risk clashes with US allies in the region, including possibly India. For the 'Pivot to Asia' by the Obama administration (seen in Beijing as a barely disguised code for the containment of China) has become the accepted strategy of both political parties—including the Trump administration—the bipartisan foreign and security elites, and the US military (MacKinney, 2016; Glaser, 2012). It is therefore very unlikely to change, whichever party is in power.

Rivalry with China, and pressure from within the US for tougher protectionist measures against Chinese imports, must be set against the strong impulse in the US for good relations with China, the roots of which have been explored earlier in this chapter. Given the very great interdependence of the US and Chinese economies, and US fears of Chinese power, this impulse is likely to survive both of these countervailing factors, and the constant irritant of Taiwan.

Given the fact that militarily China seems set to grow stronger and stronger—and the possibility of a deeply provoked China backing North Korean aggression—it seems for the foreseeable future extremely unlikely that the US would sanction a Taiwanese declaration of outright independence, or that Taiwan would make such a declaration without US sanction. Trump hinted at a change of US policy after being elected, but immediately abandoned it again in the face of warnings both from China and the US establishment.

However, if US economic relations with China were to suffer really serious disruption, then latent hostilities could quickly rise to the surface. As has often been remarked, the present structure of US–Chinese economic relations creates a kind of 'Mexican stand-off', whereby neither side can seriously hurt the other without doing terrible damage to itself. If China seriously provokes the US, then US protectionism will smash China's export economy. On the other hand, if the US seriously provokes China, then China will cease to support the dollar and the US consumer boom, bringing the domestic US economy down in ruins.

The problem for the US is that this equation is not stable, and whatever changes take place in China over time the outcome may be unfavourable for the US. If China continues to grow as at present, then sooner or later China will produce a group of middle-class consumers so large and prosperous that its economy will no longer depend on exports to the US. At that point, Beijing will be able to use its ownership of US bonds and support for the dollar as a massive lever of influence.

If, on the other hand, China's economic growth comes to a halt as a result of some combination of domestic economic and political shock, then equally China will no longer be able to support US finances in the same way, quite possibly leading to a deep US recession and a radical reduction in the US population's willingness to pay the costs of global hegemony. Fortunately, key officials on both sides have so far usually recognized the need to preserve stable relations—a striking contrast with the rhetorical bluster and immoderate ambition that characterizes US policy towards Russia and the lands of the former Soviet Union.

Russia

In the case of Russia, old hostilities stemming from the Cold War and hard-wired into US attitudes and institutions have joined with the specific events of 2014 and 2016–17 to produce a very bad relationship with the USA. Given the depth of the hostility, this is very unlikely to change in the near-to-medium term. On the other hand—barring some unforeseen development such as a new and more reckless regime in Moscow or an accidental missile launch—this mutual hostility is also unlikely to lead to actual conflict.

The legacy of the Cold War is reflected not only in attitudes but also in a range of institutions with built-in antagonism to Russia and instinctive support for Russia's enemies. These include semi-official media outlets such as Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe, and democracy promotion/propaganda outfits such as Freedom House and the National Endowment for Democracy. Created to serve the struggle against the Soviet Union and its global communist agenda, these institutions have to a considerable extent simply continued this attitude since the end of the Cold War.

In any dispute involving Russia, no matter how distant, and no matter what its relationship to real US interests, their natural tendency is to take the other side. Deliberate hostility to Russia, especially in the US Congress, is also encouraged by east European and Baltic ethnic lobbies.

The Ukrainian revolution of 2013–14 confirmed both sides in their hostility. To the Russian elites, the USA supported an illegal coup against an elected government, which also overthrew a compromise agreement on new elections to which Russia, the USA, and the EU had all signed up. To the US elites, Russia's response in annexing Crimea and backing separatists in the Donbas confirmed their image of Russian aggression and expansionism. This then developed into a picture of megalomaniac Russian plans to attack the Baltic states and even central Europe—plans for which no evidence in fact exists.

Even worse have been the effects of alleged Russian interference in the presidential elections of 2016 in support of Donald Trump (who had promised to improve relations with Russia). Beyond the hacking of the Democratic National Committee emails, for which some evidence seems to exist, the allegations against Russia in this regard are wholly unproven; but they have become a powerful weapon in US internal politics.[3] The accusations of working for Russia played an important part in forcing Trump to appoint so-called grown-ups from the security establishment to his team in an effort to restore his credibility; and backed by the US Congress (which imposed new sanctions on Russia) these successfully prevented any improvement in relations with Russia. Hopes for improvement were also undermined by Trump's return to a hawkish stand against Iran and largely unconditional support for Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, the elites of the Democratic Party seem to have emphasized Russia's malignant role in their 2016 defeat not only as a weapon against Trump but also as a way of not thinking about the deeper reasons for their loss of so many white working-class votes, and the policy changes necessary to win them back. Future Democrat administrations will therefore be implacably anti-Russian.

Despite all this, the US relationship with Russia is in fact much less dangerous than that with China, and indeed contains a significant element of shadow-boxing. Under all the often hysterical rhetoric, the 'red lines' are understood by both sides, and may be summed up as follows: the USA and NATO will not defend any country that Russia might actually attack, and Russia will not attack any country or region that the USA might actually defend. Thus the USA did not come to the defence either of Georgia in 2008 or Ukraine in 2014; and, on the other hand, Russia did not seize wider areas of eastern and southern Ukraine in 2014 when it could have done so against very weak Ukrainian opposition.

This relationship, while hostile, is therefore a good deal more stable than it appears on the surface. In this, too, it recalls the later decades of the Cold War, when the possibility of either side launching a war in Europe had disappeared. In fact, this relationship with Russia suits traditional Western security elites very well, and is a welcome distraction from much more important but much more challenging problems elsewhere. This underlying comfort with the existing situation is demonstrated by the fact that despite all the talk of a new Cold War, there are no plans whatsoever to raise and deploy to Europe the hundreds of thousands of ground troops which would be required if US leaders really did fear a Russian invasion of eastern Europe.

Europe and the transatlantic relationship

Relations with Russia constitute one area of US foreign policy where the traditional transatlantic relationship with Europe continues to matter in Washington—not surprisingly, since the entire structure of transatlantic relations during the Cold War was built around the alliance against Moscow. In other areas, the real importance of relations with Europe does not necessarily correspond to the importance they are given in the language of the US media and the US political class. Donald Trump's rhetoric during his election campaign seemed to promise a radical downgrading of relations with Europe—but as in other areas, after his election both he and the 'grown-ups' by whom he was increasingly surrounded tried to restore the previous norm. However, Trump's unpopularity ratings in Europe exceed even those of George W. Bush.

In fact, economic relations and the issue of global warming aside, there is a certain degree of conscious or unconscious play-acting about certain aspects of the present—and probably future—relationship, which stem more from domestic political and even psychological needs than from objective international reality.

On the European side, a mixture of factors stemming from the Second World War and Cold War continue to combine to produce a sense of dependence on the US: memories of the self-inflicted horrors of Europe's modern history, residual (or in the case of the east Europeans, actual) fear of Russia, and acute consciousness of Europe's weakness and division. As long as the US does not do something quite exceptionally wild, such as attacking Iran, sullen European adherence can probably be taken for granted.

However, this does not add up to a willingness to make serious sacrifices for the sake of US strategy. With the (only very partial) exceptions of Britain and France, the military contributions of America's European allies in Iraq and Afghanistan have been so pathetic that one might wonder why the US even bothered to go to the diplomatic effort of asking for them. Then again, it is equally true that the US in recent years has never made a serious change of any important policy in order to win European support.

Rather, in the geopolitical and security fields (as opposed to the equally vital but at present largely separate ones of trade, international finance, and the environment), this relationship operates on both sides at the level of psychological comfort. The Europeans need America to reassure them that they have not been left alone in the wild wood of international geopolitics, from which most instinctively shrink (except for the British establishment, for its own post-colonial reasons).

The US elites (though not the masses, who are largely indifferent) need the Europeans to reassure them that they are still 'leaders of the Free World'. This is especially true in the 'liberal internationalist' school in the Democratic party intellectual establishment, which in the run-up to the 2008 elections did its best to convince the American political classes (and perhaps most of all themselves) that the old centrality of the democratic west to US strategy was essentially sound and that it could be extended to strategy in the Middle East—and indeed to the whole world, through the idea of a global 'alliance of democracies'. In truth, Europe is practically almost worthless to the US in the critical area of the Muslim world, except for France in parts of Muslim Francophone Africa.

For a long time to come, therefore, US–European relations will be characterized by a version of an old Soviet joke: the Americans will pretend to listen to the Europeans, and the Europeans will pretend to fight for the Americans. The transatlantic alliance will not collapse completely, but neither will it amount to anything much in real geopolitical terms. If, as seems likely, the situation in Afghanistan remains permanently unsettled, then sooner or later most European forces will be withdrawn, and NATO will have lost its last *raison d'être* other than hostility to Russia and job creation for otherwise unemployable military bureaucrats and staff officers.

The greatest threat from Europe to America's position in the world is not that of Russian aggression. Rather, it is the same threat that is diminishing the 'soft power' of liberal democracy in the world as far as the USA is concerned. The threat is that as a result of economic decline and mass Muslim migration, majorities in key European countries will elect extreme right-wing governments with strong authoritarian and chauvinist tendencies. Such governments would also most probably destroy the European Union, which together with the US has been the mainstay both of liberal democracy and of free market capitalism in the modern world. Finally, according to their present programmes these parties would push for reconciliation with Russia and would refuse to participate in further US military interventions—since their brand of nationalism, while chauvinist, is also almost entirely defensive and inward-directed. The result therefore would also be a diminution of hard power in the world. These are not, however, developments which US foreign policy can easily influence.

Climate change

By far the greatest difference between European states and the Republican Party in the USA lies in the area of climate change. On this issue, the EU and its leading members have been willing openly to align with China and against the USA. Indeed, US inaction on this issue is likely to be seen in future as by far the greatest failure of US global leadership in the decades that followed the Cold War, and perhaps a significant boost to Chinese hopes of global leadership. Moreover, this is likely to be a problem for a very long time to come, until (we must assume) the obvious development of climate change makes further rejection of the facts impossible. For in his opposition to any action and his rejection of the scientific consensus, President Trump is expressing not an outlying position but that of a majority of Republicans, and indeed the increasingly doctrinaire position of the party as a whole.

This rejection is the manifestation of a number of deeply rooted factors: the influence of US energy lobbies, which especially in the field of coal also reflect the interests of hundreds of thousands of workers; fundamentalist Christian rejection of modern science in general; a traditional distrust, among sections of the US population, of 'experts', which has been boosted further in recent years by the failure of elites to predict or prevent the financial crash of 2008; a deeply rooted sense in much of the population that international treaties of this kind must involve the USA being cheated by foreigners; and, finally, the increasing polarization of US politics, leading to a fixed belief among the Republicans that anything proposed by the Democrats must automatically be opposed.

The Democrats for their part have gradually come together behind action over climate change, though only after long hesitation and with continued opposition to really tough measures. In 2015–16, after the failure of the Copenhagen Accord of 2009, President Obama was instrumental in reaching agreement with China to support the Paris Accord, in turn encouraging other countries to join. The Paris Accord provides for wider-ranging reductions in greenhouse gas emissions than any previous agreement, though it still lacks any mechanism to compel countries to meet their commitments.

On 1 June 2017, President Trump declared US withdrawal from the Paris Accord, though legally this is not possible until November 2020—in other words the date of the next US presidential elections, after which the US may have a new administration which, if it is Democrat, may resume action. In the meantime, however, action by the federal government to limit US emissions is coming to a halt, and the federal institutions engaged in this field (notably the Environmental Protection Agency) are under intense pressure. Hope for US action is therefore shifting to the US states. While those controlled by the Democrats and certain centrist Republicans may take limited action, they cannot however by definition pursue agreement and cooperation on the world stage. Trump's election deals an additional blow to already faltering hopes that the rise in global temperatures over the next century can be kept below two degrees centigrade; and this being so, in a few decade's time the chief focus of both US domestic and external policy is likely to be dealing with the horrendous human consequences—especially mass migration—that climate change is likely to unleash.

International trade

The sharpest break made by Trump from bipartisan policies of the past generation was in the field of international trade. His immediate withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) marked a rejection of the policies of the Clinton, Bush, and Obama administrations. Indeed, it can be said to have rejected an even older tradition, for from the early 1950s on US administrations had been willing to suffer negative trade consequences in order to bolster key Asian allies against communism. Similarly, the TPP (signed under President Obama) was of questionable economic value to the USA and only partly economic in its aims. Of equal importance was the desire to put together a loose economic bloc of Asia-Pacific states including the USA but excluding China, thereby helping to preserve US hegemony in the geopolitical field. The hostility to the TPP among very many Democrat as well as Republican voters is another indication of the weariness of the US masses with the sacrifices required to maintain US global leadership. Its abandonment is a major gift to China, and seems to indicate that the planned Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (excluding both China and Russia) is also likely to fail.

Washington had already suffered one severe defeat under President Obama in its efforts to limit the growth of China's economic influence. The Obama administration rejected an invitation to join the international Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), founded by China in 2014, and brought considerable pressure to bear on Asian and European allies and partners not to join. These efforts completely failed, and even close US allies such as the UK and Australia, and otherwise strongly anti-Chinese states such as India, joined the AIIB, attracted by the chance of access to Chinese investment and participation in giant infrastructure projects.

Of these, the greatest by far is the complex of proposals known in China as 'One Belt One Road', an exceptionally ambitious (or visionary, or perhaps both) plan to link China to Europe, the Indian Ocean, the Middle East, and Africa by a vast overland network of new roads, railways, and energy pipelines, stimulating in turn the creation of new economic corridors. The planned China–Pakistan Economic Corridor alone entails promised Chinese investments of more than $50 billion, and this is a small share of the whole. One Belt One Road suggests in the long term an integrated

Eurasian economy with China as the dominant player and the USA excluded. This is obviously an extremely unwelcome scenario for US strategists. This plan may prove to be beyond even China's economic and engineering capabilities. It is not clear, however, what if anything the USA can do to stop it, other than seeking closer cooperation of its own with Russia and Iran—something that other US agendas and prejudices make impossible.

As demonstrated by the strong support for Bernie Sanders (a self-declared socialist) in the Democratic Party primaries in 2017, popular demands for greater protectionism will be a factor that will strongly affect both future Democrat and future Republican administrations. Unless something can be done to halt the social and economic decline of the US white working classes, it seems inevitable that this pressure will grow still further. And all the indications are that the growth of automation and computerization will only drive this decline still further in the years to come, and spread it to wider and wider sections of the middle classes, while further enriching a small minority of the population. This being so—and despite the ardent desire both of the US financial elites to maintain free trade, and of the US foreign policy elites to create new US-led trade blocs—the role of the USA as a guarantor of free trade in the world is now in very serious doubt.

KEY POINTS

- There will be in the United States a continued bipartisan determination to remain the world's dominant power, although most probably stripped of the extreme unilateralism and anti-diplomacy of the Bush administration.
- The US will rely above all on military structures (including at least one multilateral one, NATO) as the chief vehicles for US global power and influence.
- Washington will, however, be extremely cautious about further military interventions, especially involving ground troops.
- Whether Democrats or Republicans are in power, there will be a continued effort to avoid conflict with China. This, however, is likely to come under increasing strain due to pressure from protectionist impulses in the US, from rivalry over access to natural resources, from the disputes of US allies with China, and from popular nationalist impulses within both China and the US.
- There will be widespread and deep hostility towards Russia in the US establishment, reflected in economic and other sanctions. Direct armed confrontation is, however, unlikely.
- There will be repeated attempts to validate US global leadership through gaining the formal support of western Europeans for US strategies, irrespective of the very limited real help that Europe can or will give to the US on most issues.
- Indifference to Latin America will continue, increased by growing Democratic hostility to open trade and by growing hostility in US society to illegal immigration.
- For a long time to come, the greater Middle East will remain an important and dangerous subject of US foreign policy. The erosion of US economic power and economic assistance will diminish US influence in certain areas, and the US will find it more and more difficult to control internal changes in Muslim countries.
- Due to economic stagnation, the cost of change, the influence of energy companies, and prejudice against science on the American right, action against climate change will be sporadic and will vary wildly between Republican and Democrat administrations.

Catastrophic scenarios

Most of the scenarios set out in this chapter have envisaged drift, overstretch, and relatively slow decline rather than disaster. However, in many areas of the international scene the potential for disaster does exist, and while in every individual case the odds are against this happening, if you add all of these possibilities together then the chances of the US avoiding all of them begin to seem much less promising. Yet, as noted, it seems impossible for the US establishment as presently configured to take the radical action that would be necessary to extricate the US from any one of these potentially disastrous entanglements.

The potential disasters can be broken down into three main groups: actions by the US itself; actions by third parties, with the US drawn in; and global economic crisis, crippling US power and leading to the triumph of radical chauvinist and anti-American forces in key countries of the world. As noted above, the greatest danger may come from what could be called the 1914 scenario: a situation in which the US has committed itself rhetorically to some local state which then carries out some highly provocative action, leading to a regional war in which the US is forced to intervene on its behalf.

The chief specific possibilities are the following.

- An Israeli or US attack on Iran, leading to a drastic intensification of attacks on US troops in Afghanistan, a withdrawal of European and British forces from both countries, and a radical growth in the extent and effectiveness of anti-US terrorism.
- Another major terrorist attack against the continental United States, leading to a savage and indiscriminate US response that further radicalizes much of the Muslim world and drastically increases anti-western terrorism. In the case of a US ground attack on Taliban and al-Qaeda bases in Pakistan, this could provoke the mutiny of the Pakistani army, the collapse of the state, and the entanglement of the US in a conflict so severe that it could in itself bring US global hegemony to an end.
- A further collapse of the Ukrainian state, leading to new Russian military intervention, the dispatch of US forces, and a direct clash between the USA and Russia.
- A radical growth of global protectionism, leading to a trade war between the USA and China.
- A much deeper global economic crisis than the one experienced after 2008, leading to a collapse of the US–Chinese economic relationship and a surge in mutual hostility.
- A Taiwanese declaration of independence.
- A clash between China and a neighbour (India, Japan, or Vietnam) over rival territorial claims in which the US helped China's enemy, leading to a military conflict between the US and China. This conflict would be limited to sea and air operations, but even if the US prevailed it would have a disastrous effect on the US economy. In the worst-case scenario China would destroy or drive off US naval forces and occupy Taiwan, bringing US global hegemony to an end.

Conclusion

Any of the above scenarios would be capable of severely shaking, and even possibly shattering, the existing global order and bringing US global power to an early end. Assuming that none of them takes place, then what we are likely to see instead will be a slower decline in US power. Afghanistan on top of Iraq will continue to emphasize the limitations of US military power, and more states will therefore feel able to defy the US without fearing US invasion. The Middle East will remain deeply troubled and a constant drain on US resources and attention, but without an abrupt collapse of US power.

The rise of China will probably mean that more and more states in the developing world will look to China, rather than the US, as their key partner. Russia will consolidate its predominance—although not outright control—in the area of the former Soviet Union, without the US being able to do much about it. Europe, crippled by internal divisions and economic stagnation, will make mostly impotent noises from the sidelines, neither really challenging nor really supporting US strategies.

If this is the future, then the US may be able to handle the gradual decline of US hegemony and the rise of China without disastrous convulsions. The US will never formally abandon its hegemonic ambitions, but over time will be drawn more and more to treat China and even other leading regional powers on a footing of equality. Increasing disasters as a result of global warming will make many of the seemingly vital problems of today seem less and less important, and will push major states towards closer cooperation. This is the benign version of the decline of US hegemony and the future of US foreign policy. It must be said, however, that history offers few benign examples when it comes to the decline of empires.

QUESTIONS

1. Why is the belief in America's mission to lead the world towards freedom so strong?
2. What are the positive and negative consequences of this belief for US policy and America's role in the world?
3. What are America's chief strengths and weaknesses when it comes to projecting power and influence?
4. Why is US international aid now so low compared to America's previous record during the Cold War?
5. What is the role of domestic ethnic lobbies in shaping US foreign policy?
6. How great a challenge does China pose to US global leadership?
7. What are the different possible future courses of US foreign policy with regard to China?
8. What role does Europe play in the US foreign policy mentality?
9. Why has US action against climate change been so limited and so opposed by many Americans?
10. What are some possible future disasters that could accelerate the decline of US power?

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ENDNOTES

1. For the historical background to this belief, see Tuveson (1968) and Hughes (2003: 19–41). For fictional versions of America as liberating and/or modernizing redeemer, see Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889) and the original TV series of *Star Trek*. Compare also McDougall (1997: 81) and Smith (1979: 21–45).
2. For a discussion of this theme, see Lieven and Hulsman (2006).
3. See Jessica Kwong, 'Russian Government Officials Identified for Democratic National Committee Election Hacks', *Newsweek*, 11 February 2017. For an opposing view, see Patrick Lawrence, 'A New Report Raises Big Questions About Last Year's DNC Hack', *The Nation*, 9 August 2017.

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25

US decline or primacy? A debate

Christopher Layne, William Wohlforth, and Stephen G. Brooks

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Editors' introduction

This chapter is composed of two distinct and separate contributions to a single and very important debate: is US power in decline, and if so, what would be the best grand strategy for the US to pursue? The editors of this volume asked the leading experts in these fields, Christopher Layne, William Wohlforth, and Steven Brooks, to give us a state-of-the-art summary.

For Layne, a combination of the US's high relative debt levels coupled with the rise of new 'great powers', most notably China, means that the US's position at the top of the global food chain is now in dire jeopardy. As a result, he argues that the US is now in inexorable decline and the pursuit of global primacy in the post–Cold War period has merely hastened this process of decline. Primacy, Layne argues, engenders balancing by other great powers as well as eroding America's 'soft power' global consensual leadership. The key question to emerge from this analysis is: if we accept the fact of US decline, what would be a sensible strategy for the US to pursue? In answer, Layne forcefully advocates US 'offshore balancing' whereby the US reduces its global military reach and uses regional proxies to pursue its national security interests.

In contrast, Wohlforth and Brooks argue that the United States not only remains the sole superpower, but faces comparatively weak systemic constraints on the global exercise of its power. A US grand strategy of primacy may confront many problems, they contend, but counterbalancing by other great powers is not among them. They argue that analysts overestimate the speed of China's path to matching US power (if we take Chinese per capita GDP—rather than aggregate GDP—China currently ranks below even former war-torn countries like Bosnia). And China, in their view, continues to face the kinds of systemic constraints that many commentators wrongly think confront Washington. Moreover, they argue that the US has much greater potential to extract itself from 'overstretch' than some commentators suggest, as the US can strategically withdraw from global hot-spots without the threat of subsequent great power war (as previous global hegemons did) or systemic constraints on the withdrawal process itself. In short, the pace of American decline on the world stage is widely exaggerated: unipolarity is a long way from ending.

These two individual contributions speak to a broader debate on contemporary US power, its longevity, and viable US grand strategies as we move further into the twenty-first century.

US decline

Christopher Layne

Introduction

At its inception (circa 1500), the modern international political system was composed of multiple great powers. That is, the system was multipolar. It remained that way until the Second World War ended. The pre-1939 great powers saw their power diminished by the economic and financial exertions of the war, or were decisively defeated and removed from the great power ranks. The United States and the Soviet Union were left as the two most powerful geopolitical actors. The multipolar system that had prevailed from 1500 until the start of the Second World War had given way to a bipolar system dominated by two superpowers: the US and the Soviet Union. The term 'superpower' was coined by Columbia University international relations scholar William T. R. Fox. Fox argued that the term 'great power' inadequately measured the post-war power of the United States and the Soviet Union because they had emerged from the Second World War with far more military and economic power than all other states in the international system, including the traditional great powers that had composed the pre-1939 international system (Fox 1944).[1]

The era of (nominal) bipolarity ended with the Soviet Union's 1989–91 collapse, which ushered in America's 'unipolar moment' (Krauthammer 1990). Since the early 1990s, the goal of US grand strategy has been to preserve unipolarity, which also is known as 'primacy' (or 'deep engagement'). Primacy has been the favoured policy of the American foreign policy establishment since the Cold War ended—indeed, even during the Cold War (Layne 2006). Today, however, there is a growing debate about whether primacy is a sustainable grand strategy for the US. At the heart of this debate are three interlinked issues: How durable is unipolarity? Is American power declining? What is the impact of China's rise? These issues were on the table when the second edition of this book was published in 2011. In the interval between then and the publication of this edition, the trend lines pointing to the end of primacy, which were strong in 2011, have intensified. This has important implications for the US role in the world going forward, because in East Asia a transfer of power from the US to China has begun. The outcome will determine whether the United States will be able preserve the role it has played since 1945 as East Asia's extra-regional hegemon, or whether China will displace the US and fulfil its own ambition of becoming the hegemonic power in that region.

KEY POINTS

- The US emerged as the only superpower in a unipolar world following the collapse of the Soviet Union.
- Since the Cold War's end, America's grand strategy has consciously aimed at maintaining US post–Cold War primacy.
- Today the future of unipolarity, and US primacy, are problematic.

From the unipolar moment to the unipolar exit

At the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the prevailing outlook among security studies scholars was that notwithstanding the Great Recession, unipolarity and US primacy would remain enduring features of international politics far into the future (Brooks and Wohlforth 2008; Norrlof 2010). Later commentaries agreed (Brooks and Wohlforth 2016; Lieber 2012; Joffe 2013). However, the belief that unipolarity is stable, and US primacy enduring, runs counter to the history of great power politics in the modern international system. In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, a few scholars—notably Christopher Layne and Kenneth Waltz—argued that unipolarity would be a short-lived transitional phase, because other states would recognize their self-interest in balancing against unchecked American power (Layne 1993; Waltz 1993). Unipolarity, they argued, would spur the emergence of new great powers to act as counterweights to US primacy, and the international political system would revert back to bipolarity or multipolarity.

Primacists, on the other hand, have argued that unipolarity will last for a very long time, because other states will not balance against the US. The primacist case for unipolar durability is based on two assumptions. First, it is claimed that other states gain security and economic benefits from America's dominance of the international system. Hence, there is no need for them to worry about the *im*balance of power in the United States' favour, and, therefore, there is no incentive for them to act as counterweights to the US. Moreover, by practicing self-restraint, demonstrating sensitivity for others' interests, and acting through multilateral institutions, the United States can reinforce this incentive by allaying others' fears that it will use its hegemonic power for self-aggrandizing purposes (Walt 2005; Mastanduno 1997). Along these lines, it is widely believed by US policymakers and security studies scholars that because of America's 'soft power'—the appeal of its political and economic institutions, and its culture—rather than repelling other states geopolitically, it attracts them into its orbit (Nye 2004).

Second—and more fundamentally—primacists assert that the magnitude of US power is so great that it precludes other states from balancing against its hegemony. According to the primacists, when it comes to military power and to technology, all other states are so far behind the US that they realize there is no point in even trying to catch up. In a word, the military and economic power gap between the US and its nearest rivals is insurmountable (Brooks and Wohlforth 2008, 2016; Wohlforth 2002, 1999), at least for a very long time. As Stephen Brooks and William Wohlforth contend, China may 'perhaps someday become a peer of the United States, but it is nowhere near achieving that status yet' (Brooks and Wohlforth 2016). The reason, they say, is because 'a foundational pillar of the post–World War II international system—the United States' unmatched global power position—will long remain in place' (Brooks and Wohlforth 2016).[2]

KEY POINTS

- US 'primacists' believe American an maintain its post–Cold War geopolitical preeminence.
- Primacists believe that other powers will not challenge the US because American hegemony is benign, and because they gain security and economic benefits from a US-dominated world.

The return of great power politics

In truth, however, the unipolar world is—with accelerating speed—vanishing before our very eyes. This should not be a surprise. The 1990s—the 'unipolar moment'—was a geopolitical interregnum. The years after the Soviet collapse were a time of US triumphalism, which found expression in such concepts as 'the end of history,' the belief in the universality of the 'Washington Consensus' (that free markets and democracy represented the only viable model for developing states), calls for a New American Empire,

and Washington's explicit acknowledgment that perpetuating unipolarity was the goal of US grand strategy (Fukuyama 1989; Layne and Thayer 2006). But it was only a matter of time until American primacy provoked a counter-reaction. By the early 2000s the quarter from which that counter-reaction would emerge was was clearly perceptible: a rising China. Today, the 1990s' 'holiday from history' has ended. History is back with a vengeance, and with it, great power politics has returned.

Realist international relations theory explains why the unipolar moment has proven to be momentary. Periods when one state possesses overweening power—and ambition—always provoke push-back against the dominant power (Layne 1993). It is a cardinal rule of international politics that, when one state becomes too powerful, it poses a threat to the security of the others. This is why the phenomenon of counter-hegemonic balancing has been a regular feature of international politics since 1500 (Dehio 1962). Of course, during most of that period, the international system was multipolar. And in such a system, there were always some great powers that could—and did—balance against the states that sought to dominate the international system. The same was true of the bipolar era, during which the Soviet Union attempted to balance American power. However, the advent of unipolarity in the 1990s seemed to negate the pattern of balancing that until then had been integral to great power politics. After all, if there were no geopolitical peers of the United States in the international system, which state plausibly could act as a check on American power?

The lack of balancing against American power inevitably was short-lived. During the 1990s and early 2000s, American primacists missed an important dynamic: unipolarity may suppress great power politics for a time, but it does not eliminate it. Put another way, although great power politics temporarily may be absent in a unipolar system, it always is immanent. This is because, even in a unipolar world, great power politics is bubbling just below the surface, because there is always one (or more) 'great-power-in-waiting' that sooner or later will step up and take a swing at the dominant power. A great-power-in-waiting possesses the latent power to move up the geopolitical food chain and become a peer competitor of the dominant power. It does so through a policy of economic and military self-strengthening (what international relations scholars call internal balancing). It is the effect of uneven growth rates that creates the conditions for a great-power-in-waiting to rise to actual great power status. As Robert Gilpin has observed, states grow economically at different rates (Gilpin 1981). Consequently, in *relative* terms at any moment in time some great powers (or great-powers-in-waiting) will be gaining strength, while others are losing it. As Paul Kennedy noted, time and again in international politics, relative 'economic shifts heralded the rise of new Great Powers which one day would have a decisive impact on the military/territorial order' (Kennedy 1987). This has been the case with China's rise.

KEY POINTS

- There is an established pattern in international politics of push-back against hegemonic powers, such as the US has been since the Cold War's end.
- Post–Cold War unipolarity was destined to be short-lived.
- Even in a unipolar international system there are great-powers-in-waiting that eventually will rise to great power status for the purpose of restoring a power balance.
- China is rising to great power status for the purpose of counterbalancing US hegemonic power.

China has risen

The competitiveness of the international political system galvanizes great-powers-in-waiting to emerge as full-fledged great powers. If they fail to do so, they will be punished: the dominant power(s) will throttle their rise and strip away their autonomy. The lesson for great-powers-in-waiting is to rise as quickly as possible: first by developing economically, and then by converting their newly gained wealth into military power (Zakaria 1998). In a unipolar system, the only way to rein in a dominant power is for a great-power-in-waiting to ascend to great power status and establish itself as a countervailing pole of power in the international political system. The fate of nineteenth-century China—which saw the European powers divide the nation into spheres of influence, and assume oversight of the key functions of the government in Beijing—is illustrative of what happens to great-powers-in-waiting that fail to develop their latent power into actual power (Bickers 2011). In the late twentieth century and the early twenty-first, China may be seen to have learned from history in this respect.

For some three decades (beginning with Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms) China took a low profile in international politics and avoided confrontation both with the US and with its regional neighbours. To spur its economic development and modernization, during the 1990s and early 2000s China integrated itself into the American-led world order by joining the World Trade Organization. Beijing also cultivated good relations with its ASEAN neighbours, and sought to minimize friction with the United States. China's self-described 'peaceful rise' followed the script written by Deng Xiaoping: 'Lie low. Hide your capabilities. Bide your time.' Although China's short-term policy from 1990 to 2010 focused on cooperation, this did not mean that its long-term intentions were benign. On the contrary: Beijing's policy aimed at buying time until China became wealthy enough to acquire the military capabilities needed to compete with the United States for regional hegemony in East Asia.[3] By the autumn of 2010, the time for lying low was over. The Great Recession caused a dramatic shift in Beijing's perceptions of the balance of power. China saw the economic crisis an a sign that the US was in decline while simultaneously viewing itself as a *risen* great power. China's newly gained self-confidence has manifested itself since 2010 in its muscle-flexing in the South China Sea and its willingness to contest Japan's claim to sovereignty over the Senkaku / Diaoyu islands in the East China Sea.

China's ascent to great power status has been breathtakingly rapid. Since the Great Recession's onset, the accumulated signs of waning US economic power—and China's growing economic muscle—have become too numerous to ignore. In 2008, China leaped ahead of the United States and became the world's leading manufacturing state, thereby claiming a title that the US had held for a century (Marsh 2008). In 2010, China became the world's largest exporter (surpassing Germany) (Atkins and Dyer 2010). In 2014, China vaulted past the US to become the world's the biggest trading state (Anderlini and Hornby 2014). And stunningly, in 2014 the World Bank announced that China had leapfrogged over the United States and had become the world's biggest economy, measured by purchasing power parity (PPP) (Fray 2014). To drive home the point that the US and China are in the midst of changing places in the global power league table, in July 2017 Christine Lagarde, the International Monetary Fund's managing director, stated that in ten years' time the IMF's headquarters—which the organization's bylaws require to be located in its member country with the largest economy—could be in Beijing (Reuters 2017a).

Taken together, these indicators are enormously important both economically and geopolitically. They illustrate what *relative* economic decline is all about. However, from reading what the primacists have to say, one would never know it. Primacists employ a number of arguments to downplay the importance of the evidence that China is catching up with the United States economically, or, as the World Bank has calculated, already passed it. Take GDP, for example. Some scholars suggest that instead of looking at aggregate GDP to see how the US and China stack up against each other, *per capita* GDP—in which the United States has a big (but gradually narrowing) advantage over China—is a better indicator of comparative economic power (Beckley 2011 / 12 ; Lieber 2012). This is an obvious case of moving the goalposts to play down the reality of China's economic power. *Per capita* GDP is a measure of individual living standards from state to state. However, aggregate GDP is the best indicator of a state's overall economic power and of the resources it can generate, and spend, to build up its military power. Although GDP is not a perfect measure of the comparative strength of states' economies, scholars—both in economics and security studies—agree that aggregate GDP is the appropriate yardstick for assessing the comparative strength of states' economies (Coyle 2014; Gilpin 1981; Kennedy 1987).

KEY POINTS

- China is no longer merely a rising great power—it is a *risen* one.
- Its increased power has power has buoyed China's confidence, which has resulted in China taking an assertive geopolitical stance in East Asia.
- Primacists downplay the significance of objective indicators of China's economic power, including the fact that China has passed the US as the world's largest economy (calculated using PPP).

China's economic power

Primacists also downgrade the significance of the fact that China's GDP is now larger than America's by pointing to the fact that this calculation is based on

PPP rather than on the basis of market exchange rate. Primacists assert that market exchange rate (MER) is is a more accurate method of comparing states' GDPs. PPP calculates GDP based on relative prices and purchasing power, which vary from state to state. According to primacists, the adjustment that is made to account for the purchasing power differentials among states results in overstating the size of China's economy. However, for several reasons, most economists believe that PPP is the best method for comparing different states' GDPs. First, when it comes to buying military capabilities, great powers—including China—buy the bulk of these domestically. So PPP is a good way of measuring how much military power China can purchase for a given amount of renmimbi. Second, GDP estimates based on MER can fluctuate depending on the value of a state's currency, which may or may not be an predictor of a state's underlying economic strength. In any event, the question of whether PPP or MER is the best way to measure GDP soon will be moot. In the early to mid 2020s, China will overtake the US in GDP measured by MER (IHS Markit 2014; *Economist* 2011; *Economist* 2010).

Another argument frequently employed by primacists to diminish the significance of China's economic power is to assert that it lags well behind the US in technologically. The United States, Stephen Brooks and William Wohlforth argue, has 'technological dominance' over China (Brooks and Wohlforth 2016; Joffe 2013; Lieber 2012). Primacists attribute this to the fact that China—allegedly—does not do innovation well, while the United States excels at it (Brooks and Wohlforth 2016; Joffe 2013; Lieber 2012). However, there is mounting evidence that China, in fact, has in recent years become extremely good at innovation. In January 2007, China successfully demonstrated its ability to destroy satellites in orbit. In September 2016, China began operating the world's largest radio telescope. With it the Chinese are hoping to make dramatic scientific discoveries and, in so doing, to win honours such as a Nobel Prize (Buckley and Wu 2016). In August 2016, China launched the world's first quantum satellite, which could lead 'to new, completely different methods for transmitting information' (Wong 2016). China is making strides in developing a global quantum communications network, which will be completely invulnerable to hacking (Mitchell and Liu 2017). In yet another example of how China is catching up with the US in innovation and technology, in June 2016, a Chinese computer (using made-in-China microprocessors) topped the ranking of the world's fastest supercomputers (Markoff 2016). In July 2017, China's State Council announced an ambitious plan to sprint to the front of the pack in artificial intelligence (AI), including both military and civilian applications (Mozur 2017; Markoff and Rosenberg 2017). Indeed, the *Economist* recently stated that already 'China could be a close second to America—and perhaps even ahead of it—in some areas of AI' (*Economist* 2017).

American primacists have overlooked—or ignored—other important manifestations of Chinese economic power. During the Great Recession, US president Barack Obama admitted that the US was too deeply in debt to lead the global economy back to health (Sanger and Landler 2009). Instead, it was China's massive stimulus program that rescued the global economy. In East and Southeast Asia, during the last three decades China has displaced the United States as the leading trading partner of the ASEAN states and of South Korea. The lessening of Washington's regional economic influence, and the corresponding jump in Beijing's, has been dramatic. In 1993 China accounted for only 2 per cent of ASEAN's trade in goods, and the US accounted for 18 per cent. By 2013, however, the American share of ASEAN trade in goods had shrunk to 8.2 per cent while China's had skyrocketed to 14 per cent. The American 'pivot' to Asia announced by the Obama administration was, in large part, intended to offset the magnetic power of China's economy by reassuring states in East and Southeast Asia that they could rely on American security guarantees. In theory, the pivot would send a signal that the ASEAN states, South Korea, and Australia do not have to choose between aligning with Beijing to protect their economic interests, or aligning with Washington to ensure their security (Campbell 2016). This strategy, however, appears not to be working.

Increasingly, regional geopolitical alignments are being shaped more by Beijing's economic muscle than by US military capabilities. In the two past years, Malaysia, Cambodia, Myanmar, and the Philippines all have tilted away from the US and toward China. Even Australia, long a staunch US ally, is taking a more equidistant political stance between Washington and Beijing because of its economic dependence on China. In an acknowledgment of Beijing's successful use of its economic clout to shape the regional balance of power, a senior Singaporean diplomat said: 'Nobody wants the US to leave the region to China, but China is using its economic leverage, its geographic position and its lack of interest in human rights to try and change the balance of influence in a region where the vagaries of

American politics are now on stark display' (quoted in Perlez 2016). The August 2017 ASEAN summit in Manila is another example of how China has leveraged its economic power to support its diplomatic goals. Beijing was able to persuade the ASEAN states to omit from the summit communiqué any references to its activities in the South China Sea, and also to make the proposed Sino-ASEAN code of maritime conduct non-binding (Reuters 2017). Also in Manila, ASEAN refused to back either American military action or sanctions to punish North Korea for its intercontinental ballistic missile tests. ASEAN secretary-general Le Luong Minh said that most of the group's ten members were 'not for unilateral [actions] and largely not for sanctions. We are for mutual existence' (quoted in Watts 2017). In coming years these trends are likely to continue, and China will have even more success in using its economic power to attain its geopolitical goals in the region, as illustrated by Beijing's launch of the new Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

KEY POINTS

- China's economic power and geopolitical influence in East and Southeast Asia is growing; America's economic power in East and Southeast Asia is ebbing.
- Chinese economic leverage will draw many states in East and Southeast Asia into China's orbit—thereby frustrating the primary objective of the US pivot to Asia.

'One Belt One Road'

In May 2016 leaders of twenty-nine nations, and representatives from some eighty others, descended on Beijing to discuss China's ambitious 'One Belt One Road' (OBOR) development initiative—also referred to by some as the 'New Silk Road.' This plan is the follow-on to China's creation several years ago of the AIIB, which is a new major international institution to foster economic development in Southeast Asia, Southwest Asia, and Central Asia. OBOR—a signature policy of Chinese president Xi Jinping—calls for investing massive amounts of money ($1 trillion according to some reports) to promote trade and economic development by constructing transportation links that will tie together East Asian manufacturing hubs with Southeast Asia, Central Asia, Southwest Asia, and Africa (Miller 2017). These new transportation routes will also connect China, the participating nations, and Europe. China's aims are twofold: to create new markets for the goods and services it produces, and to extend its geopolitical influence. Some analysts see OBOR as a Chinese version of the Marshall Plan. Others see it as a bold strategic ploy. *Financial Times* columnist Philip Stephens suggests that OBOR is part of Beijing's strategy to gain dominance of the Eurasian 'heartland'—the key to gaining global hegemony, according to the early-twentieth-century British geopolitical thinker Sir Halford Mackinder (Stephens 2017).

The AIIB and OBOR are milestones on China's path to great power status. They also both are indicators of receding American power—not just geopolitically, but also with respect to the international economy and international institutions. When discussing the Sino-American rivalry, less attention is usually paid to these issues than to the military balance between the United States and China, or to the flashpoints—the South China Sea, the East China Sea, Taiwan, the Korean Peninsula—that could spark a conflict. But they will be no less important in shaping relations between Washington and Beijing in coming decades, and in determining the fate the of international order—the *Pax Americana* (a.k.a. the liberal rules based international order)—that the United States built following the end of the Second World War.

When Beijing rolled out its AIIB plans, the Obama administration kicked into high gear diplomatically in an attempt to squelch it. As the *New York Times* reported, Washington 'lobbied against the [AIIB] with unexpected determination and engaged in a vigorous campaign to persuade important allies to shun the project' (Perlez 2014). Washington's attempt to dissuade its allies from joining the AIIB failed. The dam burst in March 2015 whem Britain announced it was going to become a member of the AIIB. London's decision set off a stampede as other states that previously were on the fence rushed to sign up for membership in the new institution. Those joining the AIIB included traditional US allies such as France, Germany, Italy, Australia, and South Korea. Beijing's diplomatic coup in attracting widespread support for its AIIB initiative was viewed—correctly—as a direct challenge to America's global geopolitical and economic leadership. Writing in the *Financial Times*, former treasury secretary Lawrence Summers said that London's AIIB decision and its aftermath 'may be remembered as the moment the United States lost its role as the underwriter of the global economic system' (Summers 2015).

China's AIIB initiative is a simultaneous challenge to both the US leadership of the global economy

and the *Pax Americana*'s institutional (and ideational) foundations. At the 1944 Bretton Woods conference, the US took the lead in constructing the structure of the post–Second World War international economy by creating the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which were intended to anchor the post-war international economic system. Both of these institutions were designed to ensure Washington would have decisive decision-making power. The AIIB aims at enhancing China's roles both in managing the international economy and in international development. The AIIB is also meant to demonstrate that China is serious about its demands to be given a share of decision-making power in the IMF and the World Bank commensurate with its current economic and financial clout. The AIIB is—and is intended to be—a direct challenge to both of these Bretton Woods legacy institutions. And the willingness of US allies to defy Washington by joining the AIIB shows the magnetic power of China's economy.

Ostensibly Washington opposed AIIB because of doubts that the new bank would adhere to the same environmental, governance, lending, transparency, labour, and human rights standards as the IMF, World Bank, and Asian Development Bank. However, Treasury Secretary Jack Lew was more candid when he said that, because of the AIIB, America's 'international credibility and influence are being threatened' (quoted in Donnan and Dyer 2015). For their part, the Chinese regarded—correctly—the US stance as an attempt to counter China's rise, and its ambition to become the dominant power in East Asia. As former vice-minister of finance Wei Jianguo put it, 'You could think of this as a basketball game in which the US wants to set the duration of the game, size of the court, the height of the basket and everything else to suit itself. In fact, the US just wants to exclude China from the game' (Anderlini 2014).

KEY POINTS

- China's 'One Belt One Road' (OBOR) strategy is a classic example of using economic statecraft to advance geostategic goals.
- OBOR could stimulate China's economic growth.
- OBOR could make China both geopolitical and economically dominant in Asia, and allow it to dominate what the British geopolitical thinker Sir Halford Mackinder called 'the heartland'.

China's military power

For primacists, the ultimate guarantee of US dominance is America's military power. This, they say, is unrivaled. Moreover, they assert that—mostly because of America's purported advantage over China in technology—it will be a very long time before China is able to equal the US in military power. This argument is true and not true simultaneously. What is true is that China is a long way from being able to match America's *global* power projection capabilities, although Beijing is cautiously beginning to assert its military power beyond its region. It has opened up its first overseas military base in Djibouti, which is strategically located on the Horn of Africa. China has expanded its military presence in the Indian Ocean. And during summer 2017 several Chinese warships joined the Russian navy for exercises in the Baltic Sea. These all are possible harbingers of China's long-term ambitions. Before it can become a global power, however, China must take care of business closer to home.

There is a pattern to great power rise. First, great-powers-in-waiting adopt policies of domestic economic development and state-building. Second, as they become wealthier, they transition from being great-powers-in-waiting to being rising great powers. Rising great powers acquire important stakes in overseas markets and raw materials, and they need to protect their access to these by building power projection capabilities. Third, rising great powers seek to dominate their own geographical backyards.[4] A rising great power with global ambitions *first* must become dominant in its own geographic backyard (Mearsheimer 2002; Layne 2006). That, after all, is what the 'struggle for mastery in Europe' was all about from 1500 to 1945 (Taylor 1955). Today, China is competing with the United States for regional hegemony in East and Southeast Asia. To win this contest with the US, China does not need to match America's global power projection capabilities; Beijing only needs to gain military equality, or supremacy, over the US in East and Southeast Asia. However, while today the Sino-American relationship is regionally focued, its outcome will profoundly affect the future global balance of power.

The intensifying Sino-American competition is a 'struggle for mastery in Asia' (Friedberg 2011). Primacists believe that China will not be able to challenge America's post-1945 regional dominance in East Asia for a *very* long time. This is because, or so they say, the US has a huge lead over China with respect to military capabilities (Brooks and Wohlforth 2016). Their confidence that the US military advantage over China

will be long-lasting may be misplaced, however. In East Asia—not globally—recent studies by American military analysts suggest that China is much closer to catching the United States than the primacists believe.

In a 2015 report on the Sino-American military balance, the RAND Corporation refers to the 'receding frontier of US military dominance' in East Asia (Hegenbotham and Nixon 2015). According to RAND, the trend lines in the Sino-American military rivalry in East Asia are not favourable for the United States: 'Although China has not closed the gap with the United States, it has narrowed it—and quite rapidly. Even for many of the contributors to this report, who track developments in Asian military situations on an ongoing basis, the speed of change … was striking' (Hegenbotham and Nixon 2015). Roger Cliff, an East Asian security expert at RAND, says that by 2020 China's military will almost be on an equal footing regionally with America's with respect to doctrine, equipment, personnel, and training (Cliff 2015). Consequently, he predicts that by 2020 China will have ended American military dominance in East Asia, and later in the 2020s it will be able to challenge the regional status quo.

KEY POINTS

- Contrary to what US primacists assert, China is rapidly narrowing the gap in military power between itself and the US in East and Southeast Asia.
- Some US military analysts believe China will be strong enough militarily in the eary 2020s to challenge the US in Asia.

What does China's rise mean?

Changes in the distribution of relative power are both a cause and a consequence of the rise and fall of great powers. Propelled by favourable relative power shifts, every so often new great powers burst onto the scene—as did the US, Germany, and Japan in the late nineteenth century. Today, it is China that is entering the great power ranks. One thing we know from history is that when new great powers emerge, geopolitical upheaval is the result. An ascending new great power enters an international political system where the pecking order is already established, and where one great power is dominant (or, as security studies scholars say, hegemonic). This was the case in the late nineteenth century. Germany and the United States attained great power status during the *Pax Britannica*. Rather than acceding to British dominance of international politics, both the US and Germany sought to wrest the mantle of geopolitical supremacy away from Britain. The result was a 'power transition' that took two world wars to sort out, and ended in the establishment of the *Pax Americana* in 1945.

Rising great powers are dissatisfied with the prevailing international status quo, which reflects the interests of the dominant great power(s)—with respect to territory, economic leverage, prestige, and status. The dominant great power also establishes the international system's institutions, norms, and rules. Ascending new great powers flex their muscles to change the prevailing status quo. In addition to re-ordering the material balance of power in the international system, rising great powers want to be accorded status and prestige equal to that of the leading great power (Paul, Larson, and Wohlforth 2014). Indeed, China's insistence that it be accorded equality with the US with respect to status and prestige is a key driver of the bourgeoning Sino-American rivalry.

Power transitions are where the rubber meets the road in great power politics. They are powder kegs because they are about the very nature of the international order. Will the declining dominant power be able to preserve what for it is a beneficial status quo, or will the upstart challenger overthrow the old international order and replace it with a new one that advances its interests? Power transitions, thus, are about whether the status quo can prevail over the forces of geopolitical revisionism. When a rising challenger nears parity with the declining dominant power, invariably its dissatisfaction with the existing international order boils over. After all, the existing order was constructed by the declining dominant power during better days to privilege its own interests. Rising challengers want to revise the existing order and bring it into line with what they perceive are the new relative power realities.

In the abstract, power transitions can be resolved peacefully by using diplomacy to reconcile the rising challenger's demands for change in the hierarchies of power, prestige, and influence with the dominant state's desire to hang on to as much of its heretofore privileged position as possible. But in the real world it is difficult—indeed, almost impossible—to harmonize the competing interests of the status quo and the revisionist powers. For the declining great power, the prospect of a power transition poses an excruciating grand strategic dilemma. Should it attempt to preserve its primacy, and

the existing international order—which means being willing to go to war to slap down the challenger—or should it try to avoid war by accepting the inevitability that it will be supplanted by the challenger as the leading state in the system, which will use its newly won dominance to replace the existing international order with a new one that reflects its own preferences?

Power transitions almost always culminate in war (Allison 2017; Layne 2018a; Layne 2018b; Layne 2015). The onus for avoiding conflict lies with the declining hegemon, because rising challengers are confident that the geopolitical tide is flowing in their direction. Although the declining hegemon has the option of avoiding war, doing so would require it to give up some of its own power to accommodating the rising challenger (Carr 2016). This is a choice that declining dominant powers almost never make, however. Instead, they choose war over 'appeasement'. In the coming years this is the choice that United States will have to make with respect to China as the transition of power from the US to China intensifies.

The rivalry between the US and China for dominance in East Asia bears a strong resemblance to the pre-1914 Anglo-German geopolitical competition. Before the Great War an economically dynamic and militarily powerful Germany challenged a declining Britain's claim to be the dominant power in the international system. A debate took place among British policymakers about whether London should confront a rising Germany or conciliate it. The United States now faces a similar choice with respect to China. It is Washington that has the 'last clear chance' to avoid the looming Sino-American conflict. To do so, the US would need to make real concessions to Beijing on Taiwan, on territorial issues in the East and South China Seas, and on the Korean peninsula. It would need to cease interfering in China's internal affairs. There is little evidence that the US will make these concessions, however.

KEY POINTS

- A power transition between an increasingly powerful China and a declining US is underway in East and Southeast Asia.
- Power transition dynamics are fraught with danger, because they almost result in war between the rising challenger and the declining dominant power
- To avoid a Sino-American war in the next decades, the US will have accommodate a rising China.

Conclusion

The American foreign policy establishment values American primacy and refuses to accept that this inexorably is slipping away because the balance of power is swinging in China's direction. The manner in which the American foreign policy establishment interprets history is also a major impediment to a policy of peacefully accommodating rising Chinese power. US policymakers are quick to invoke the 'lessons' of the 1930s while overlooking the Great War's causes. This could have tragic consequences. As Johns Hopkins professor David Calleo observed, the correct take-away from the Great War's outbreak 'is not so much the need for vigilance against aggressors, but the ruinous consequences of refusing reasonable accommodation to upstarts' (Calleo 1978).

US primacy: the big picture—a one-superpower world

William Wohlforth, and Stephen G. Brooks

Introduction

Donald Trump's election, Russia's pugnacious policies in Ukraine and Europe, China's insistent revisionism in its near abroad, a Syrian civil war unfolding in ways seemingly indifferent to Washington's policies—these and many more events speak to dramatic changes in international politics. Clearly, any argument about continuity has a tough row to hoe. Yet that is precisely the argument we advance here. As important as these new developments are, they do not reflect a shift away from a world containing only one true superpower. In that narrow but important sense, the deep structure of world politics, and the constraints and incentives it places on US foreign policy, remain the same. Recent history should caution against hasty proclamations about fundamental power shifts. As recently as the middle of the last decade, pundits considered the term 'unipolar' to be too modest to capture the extraordinary position of power that the United States appeared to occupy. Only 'empire' would do. But in the eyes of the foreign policy commentariat, the United States fell from global empire to hapless Gulliver in a historical eyeblink. As the decade closed, the US National Intelligence Council's *Global Trends 2025* report (Directorate of National Intelligence 2008) added an authoritative voice to the growing chorus of

decline (e.g. Layne 2006; Rachman 2011; Zakaria 2008; Khanna 2009). It was the report's 'assumptions of a multipolar future, and therefore dramatic changes in the international system' that most clearly differentiated it from its predecessor—*Mapping the Global Future*, released only four years earlier (Directorate of National Intelligence 2004). Those who had long heralded the end of a one-superpower world were quick to claim vindication.[4]

The United States' post-2008 setbacks have rightly punctured the 'empire' bubble of the early-to-mid-2000s, but the rapidity and scale of the perceptual pendulum's swing towards expectations of multipolarity's arrival should give us pause. In the absence of major war or state collapse, the scales of global power move slowly. And there is a powerful human tendency to overreact to salient trends, allowing expectations of a changed tomorrow to affect assessments of today's reality. Did the 2008 financial crisis and ensuing recession, coupled with the continuing rise of China, India, and other emerging powers, really radically transform the power landscape in a scant five years? Or are analysts merely thinking about what might someday happen as if it were already happening today?

This essay offers three correctives to the currently popular narrative concerning global power trends. First, the scale and rapidity of the power shift are routinely and radically overstated. We still live in a one-superpower world; multipolarity is not just around the corner. Second, analysts misunderstand the causes and nature of the United States' 'imperial overstretch', leading them to overestimate its severity and underestimate its reversibility. While the United States' fiscal problems will generate pressure to reduce expenditures, equating these constraints to those faced by overstretched great powers of the past is profoundly misleading. Third, the core dynamics that have characterized great-power politics since the advent of unipolarity two decades ago remain robustly in place. Key features of the international system that constrained leading states of the past do not work against the United States to anything like the same degree. Yet rising second-tier powers, notably China, continue to face those constraints. The result is a very different picture of the United States' place in the world, with important implications for US foreign policy, which we address in the concluding section.

American decline and the return of multipolarity? Not so fast

The problem with the current multipolarity talk is simple: comprehensive, aggregate capabilities—the kind of capabilities powers need to create and sustain global orders—remain concentrated in the United States to a historically unprecedented degree. Scholars from Morgenthau to Gilpin and Waltz have long recognized that what matters when thinking about the big questions of grand strategy and systemic change is a state's share of aggregated power capabilities: raw economic heft, technological prowess, military and naval power, innovation, organizational-institutional competence, size and location, the lot. As seductive as it is to single out one index—so much easier to measure!—it's misleading, because each element interacts with others to support a state's capacity to act on the international stage (see Controversies 25.1).

CONTROVERSIES 25.1: THE DIFFICULTIES OF FORECASTING A RETURN TO MULTIPOLARITY

As scholars who have studied power assessment and forecasts over the years, we are well aware that neither economists nor political scientists nor country experts possess crystal balls that tell them when a state's overall capacity will cross a certain threshold. We do not pretend to be able to perform such magic. We cannot rule out the possibility that the myriad social, economic, technological, and institutional factors that underlie China's power will all line up favourably so as to propel it upward *and* that the similarly complex set of factors underlying US power will all conspire against it. We cannot rule out the possibility that, in addition, Beijing will make all the right decisions and Washington all the wrong ones. Nor can we rule out the possibility that other major states, in Asia and globally, will seek to facilitate China's rise and hasten America's decline. And were that concatenation to occur, yes, we might see a very consequential shift in aggregate power relations in a comparatively short time. Although many things are possible, in social science we work with probabilities, and the balance of what we know about economic growth, technological change, diplomatic relationships, institutional and political stability, and adaptability suggests that a rapid end of a single-superpower world is extremely unlikely.

If you read carefully the heralds of multipolarity, you will notice a near-myopic focus on aggregate GDP. Yet by that measure, India would have surpassed Britain in the mid-nineteenth century—obviously not a good measure of their relative capabilities. Forecasting precisely when China's aggregate GDP will surpass America's is a highly uncertain game. But what we can be certain of is that matching US aggregate GDP will not make China America's peer in overall capabilities.

Indeed, there are strong reasons to suspect that analysts overestimate the speed of China's path to matching US power. Their focus on aggregate GDP growth obscures three important general features of the systemic setting and the US–China power transition. First, the only way a unipolar system can end rapidly is if the unipole collapses or loses a hegemonic war. Barring these unlikely events, the system changes as the result of the cumulative effect of differential rates of growth in overall capabilities, a prolonged process. The last polarity shift from bi- to unipolarity occurred extremely rapidly with the implosion of the Soviet Union. That experience may underlie contemporary expectations that multipolarity is around the corner. But even the most extreme declinists do not believe that the United States' grasp on superpowerdom is as fragile as Moscow's was in the mid-1980s.

Second, as impressive as China's rise has been over the past three decades, we should not forget that it has ascended from an extremely impoverished base and it still remains a developing country on the basis of the standard measures (China's GDP per capita in 2015 matched that of the Dominican Republic). Because of its huge population, it has a large economy. And because its economy is large, analysts began to think of it as the 'key challenger' to American primacy long before it entered the top league in technological capacity (both generally and in the military realm specifically). Previous challengers have not been thought of as such until their overall technological and military capacities had approached or even surpassed those of the dominant state. Although China's economic rise is swift, its rise in other capabilities is more gradual. The lag between when China will match the US in economic size and when it will match the US's technological and military capacity is thus likely to be much longer than in previous historical cases in which the rising challenger was technologically close or equal to the dominant state (Brooks and Wohlforth 2015/16).

Third, though it is entering the ranks of middle-income countries, China's growth trajectory is flattening out, as predicted by standard growth models in economics. Needless to say, China faces a wide range of pressing internal challenges—including its polluted environment, corruption, absence of a social safety net, inefficient state enterprises, rapidly aging population, and the rising demands of its middle class. Setting all those challenges aside, however, the key point is that most countries fail to escape the 'middle-income trap,' and even those that do so then begin to grow much more slowly. Hence the debate concerns not whether but by how much China's growth rate will slow. And even if one accepts that China will grow faster than the US and therefore that the gap in GDP will continue to close and then reverse, it is important to factor in how bad GDP is as a measure of economic prowess, especially when comparing very unlike economies such as those of the US and China. GDP fails to consider key aspects of globalization and environmental sustainability, and under-reports knowledge-based economic activities (Brooks and Wohlforth 2016). Worse, as the *Economist* (2012) observes, GDP 'is a measure of income, not wealth. It values a flow of goods and services, not a stock of assets. Gauging an economy by its GDP is like judging a company by its quarterly profits, without ever peeking at its balance-sheet.' A new measure of 'inclusive wealth' developed by the UN that overcomes most of these problems yields a rather different comparison: the United States' wealth amounted to almost $144 trillion in 2010—a level 4.5 times higher than China's level of inclusive wealth in 2010 ($32 trillion) (UNU-IHDP and UNEP 2014).

None of these points is directly disputed by scholars of international relations, who generally agree that comprehensive capabilities are what matters, and that they tend to change slowly. Why then does there seem to be such heated discussion about the impending end of American primacy? One answer is the many meanings that analysts attach to the term 'unipolarity', which for some even seems to be a synonym for global empire or hegemony.[5] When unipolarity comes to be defined as the United States' ability to defend Georgia from Russia, as Chris Layne comes close to doing in a recent essay (Layne 2011), we know the term's usefulness is in trouble. In our past writings, we went to great pains to define and use this term in ways consistent with its origins in polarity theory (Brooks and Wohlforth 2008: 11–13). It is not about influence or

outcomes, e.g. whether the United States can defend this or that former imperial province of Moscow, but about whether the system 'contains one state whose share of capabilities places it in a class by itself compared to all other states' (Brooks and Wohlforth 2008: 13). Barry Buzan most aptly describes the current system as a '1 + x world,' with 1 superpower and x number of great powers (see Key quotes 25.1). Although we use the more conventional terminology of unipolarity, 'our analysis does not hinge on the particular term used to describe the current system' (Brooks and Wohlforth 2008: 12). What matters for students of US foreign policy is how a world with one superpower operates; and while China is rising it is not and will not soon be a superpower.

KEY QUOTES 25.1: A ONE SUPERPOWER WORLD

There is only one superpower, and there are no other plausible candidates on the horizon for that status for at least a couple of decades.

(Buzan 2004: 65)

KEY POINTS

- Aggregate capability, not just economic size, is the key to power, and on that metric the US lead remains robust.
- Aggregate capabilities shift slowly, and China has a long way to go.
- China's growth trajectory has flattened out and it may not escape the 'middle-income trap.'

It's not your grandfather's imperial overstretch

The US military is stretched thin, and its government budget is awash in red ink. These pressures will constrain Washington for years to come. For scholars such as Layne, this is an obvious case of what historian Paul Kennedy called 'imperial overstretch'. Kennedy (1987) used the term to describe the fate of past leading states whose 'global interests and obligations' became 'far too large for the country to be able to defend them all simultaneously'. By using this term, Layne and others imply that the fiscal constraints and military stresses of recent years are necessitated by the United States' structural position in the international system. In this view, the United States is stuck in a structural trap with a vicious feedback loop: its position as the leading state in a unipolar system demands ever more resources, which then serves to undermine its place in that system. It sounds like a theoretically derived, structurally determined argument for the rapid end of American primacy. The problem is that it is wrong for three reasons.

First, unipolarity did not emerge because the United States took on some new, expensive commitment. Rather unipolarity emerged because the Soviet challenger collapsed—at a time when the United States was already the strongest power. Today the costs and dangers of the Cold War have faded into history, but they need to be kept in mind in order to assess the current US position accurately. The United States has significantly reduced defence expenditure compared to the Cold War norm. During the peak Cold War years, 7–12 per cent of US GDP went to defence. Today the figure is 4–5 per cent. Risks are lower as well. Cold War crises—Berlin, Cuba, the nuclear alert during the Yom Kippur War of 1973, the 1982 Able Archer exercise that spooked the Soviets into a war scare—all raised the spectre of a global thermonuclear war. Today, despite many new security challenges, American decision makers do not confront or court risks of this magnitude. This is not to say the American grand strategy in the unipolar era is without costs and risks. There have been interventions that have imposed heavy economic costs and the tragic human cost of some 7000 killed in action and tens of thousands wounded. But the human and economic toll of US Cold War grand strategy, and, indeed, of the grand strategic commitments of most powers in bi- and multipolar systems of the past, was much higher.

Second, and even more important, neither the US invasion of Iraq, nor its 'nation-building' effort in Afghanistan, nor indeed its ballooning deficit, are necessitated by its structural position as the leading superpower. These constraints emerge mainly from wars of choice, domestic entitlements, decisions regarding taxes, and the financial crisis and Great Recession of 2008–10. All serious matters, to be sure, but not the kind of 'imperial overstretch' that Paul Kennedy analysed. In all those cases, overstretch emerged from commitments to contain great power counterbalancing or hegemonic rivalry. These states had to frame policy in the shadow of a potential major war with peer rival great powers, which meant that devoting a large

share of their GDP to defence and extracting more resources from their societies for security policy could be plausibly be seen as an existential necessity. Solving the problem of imperial overstretch through retrenchment was extremely hard for such powers, for cutting back on various commitments seemed to risk geopolitical catastrophe. Unipolarity spares the US that kind of trade-off. Because its international position does not hinge on the specific policies that got it into its current military and fiscal constraints, it has much greater potential to extract itself from 'overstretch' with its position intact than did the historical leading states examined by Kennedy, Gilpin (1981), and others. Will this be easy to do? No. It is simply easier than if the US faced the kind of strategic situations confronted by the overstretched powers analysed by Gilpin and Kennedy.

One way to see this is to look at the balance of power realists' own analysis. To their credit, Layne and many fellow realists—notably John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt (2002, 2003)—opposed the US decision to invade Iraq (Coalition for a Realistic Foreign Policy 2002). From their writings in the lead-up to the invasion, two salient facts emerge. First, balance of power theory is not part of their reasoning for counselling the US against the invasion. They predicted that an invasion would have high costs, but counterbalancing by other great powers was not among them. And they proved to be right. The costs of invading Iraq turned out to be high because of the challenges intrinsic to nation building and counterinsurgency, not because of systemic constraints identified in balance of power realism (or any other systemic constraints, for that matter). Second, their main argument was precisely that the invasion was not necessary for the United States' security and global position. They urged Washington to adopt other policies—containment and deterrence—that would serve US interests at a much lower cost. At no point did they suggest that invading Iraq was a necessary condition of maintaining the US position of global primacy.[6]

Bad choices can lead to bad outcomes. The United States chose to pursue major military undertakings simultaneously in two tough countries even as it sharply cut taxes, expanded domestic entitlements, and made some regrettable decisions about its financial system. The consequences of these choices are serious but their origins are not systemic. After all, balanced power is no guarantee against bad choices—think of the Vietnam War, the savings and loan debacle,[7] and the very fiscal crises that sparked Kennedy's and Gilpin's concerns in the first place. Having a peer competitor not only did not induce prudence in Washington, it clearly fed into a whole series of costly and dangerous interventions in the third world. Invading Iraq and pursuing a more than decade-long nation building effort in Afghanistan are choices—arguably poor ones—but not a requirement of the United States' position.

Ultimately, Charles Glaser (2011) is right to conclude that 'the overreach claim is more of an observation about the past than a well-supported prediction about the future .... None of the basic arguments about unipolarity explain why [poor choices] are unavoidable.' America may well exhaust itself, but its position of primacy means that the margin of error is actually much greater: it will require a longer series of bad choices to reach true overstretch than if the external environment did powerfully constrain the US.

The third problem with the imperial overstretch argument is that an outpouring of new research reveals scant evidence for its core claim that the burdens of the US's global responsibilities outstrip its economic capabilities or cause its fiscal woes (Brooks, Ikenberry, and Wohlforth 2012–13; Brooks and Wohlforth 2016). To take one example, military spending is simply not a significant predictor of US debt (Norloff and Wohlforth 2016). None of this is to deny that the US faces economic challenges, it is just that a key plank of the imperial overstretch argument—that 'imperial' foreign policy demands military expenditures that drive debt and decline—lacks any empirical support.

KEY POINTS

- America's fiscal travails are in significant part the result of domestic, not foreign, policy.
- Thanks to unipolarity, the US is far better positioned than leading states of the past to extricate itself from foreign policy challenges.

Still unipolar politics as usual

Many events are obviously not going America's way. Scholars frequently read these difficulties as evidence of their claim that the international system tightly constrains the United States. Many realists, in particular, argue that great power balancing either is already occurring (and thus that America's current foreign difficulties are partly due to the effects of

counterbalancing) or is in the process of re-emerging (and thus that American foreign policy will only become harder to manage in the future). These assessments are wrong: balancing is not occurring and is not set to do so anytime soon.

A little history may help put this debate in perspective. After the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, balance of power realists claimed that the resulting unipolarity would be but an evanescent 'moment' because great powers would balance against the United States, thereby recreating a multipolar system (Layne 1995; Waltz 1993). Towards the end of the decade, with great power balancing nowhere in sight, one of us (Wohlforth 1999) analysed the dynamics of unipolarity, arguing that the concentration of power in the United States made balancing strategies unfeasible for other major powers. Subsequent studies (Brooks and Wohlforth 2002, 2005; Wohlforth 2002) built upon this analysis and provided the basis for the examination in our 2008 book, *World out of Balance*, in which we presented the most fulsome analysis showing why balance of power theory does not apply to a unipolar system. We tested the argument empirically, delineating the observable implications we would expect to find in the historical record if our argument were valid as well as those we would expect to find if balance of power realism had any purchase in the current era. The results showed not only that balancing was not happening, but also clearly illuminated a crucial reason *why* it wasn't happening: the concentration of power in the United States as well as the geography of unipolarity made it just too expensive and difficult for would-be balancers such as China and Russia.

The balance of power realists' response has been, essentially, just wait, balancing and multipolarity are coming, this time for real (e.g. Layne 2011). Space constraints forbid a full discussion of the evidence here. Readers may consult our analysis and evaluate for themselves the evidence we present for why our argument is valid. The main point is that we have presented a falsifiable argument and tested it, while balance of power realists, thus far, have generally responded by simply reiterating their argument and asserting that balancing will occur eventually. For further discussion see Campbell Craig's comments in Key quotes 25.2.

KEY QUOTES 25.2: MILITARY BALANCING AND REALIST ARGUMENTS

The absence of traditional military balancing against the US since the end of the Cold War, a fact of international life that almost no one now denies, poses a major problem for balance-of-power Realists, who argue that major powers are destined to build up their own military forces, and/or create formal military alliances, in order to balance against a dominant state. Prominent structural realists have predicted such balancing behaviour since the early 1990s, but it hasn't happened yet. ... [B]alance-of power Realists must show why major powers have not shown any indication of balancing so far over two decades, indisputably a long time in the context of modern international history . Otherwise, [they] are forced simply to assert that a new polar system will emerge, someday, simply because that is how international politics operates. This, as any student of social science knows, is an unfalsifiable argument. Nations simply are not trying to match the US in military capabilities or to form formal military alliances as they constantly did with respect to far less preponderant states over the past 300 years. Conventional Realists need to account for this: they need to show how balance-of-power theory can explain this absence. Responses that amount simply to a plea to 'just wait', or to describe behaviour as 'balancing' that never would have been called that before, do not fulfill this demand.

(Craig 2010)

Indeed, amidst all the talk of balancing and 'soft balancing', analysts have missed the main story of the past fifteen years: systemic constraints on other major powers, not the United States. China began and ended the 2000s with a single reliable ally: North Korea. In comparison, in the post-2001 period, nine eastern European countries joined NATO, and Japan and Australia buttressed their alliances with the United States and participated in US-led military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Moreover, India jettisoned its foundational principle of non-alignment to cooperate with the United States on a range of military activities. By one calculation, of the thirty-nine states that surround the rising regional powers of Russia and China, all but five have engaged in activities that more closely link them to the United States since 2001 (Selden 2010).

Consider also international institutions and globalization. Because most other powers lack the material

capacity to help redefine rules and provide public goods, international rules and norms constrain them far more than Washington. And the global economy constrains smaller powers far more than the US: while other powers are constrained by America's outsized role in the global economy from using economic statecraft (e.g. sanctions) against the US, Washington uses them with impunity against others (albeit not always effectively).

In short, notwithstanding important new developments in international affairs, the United States continues to operate in a permissive systemic environment, while other states, notably China, do not. This hardly means that the US is omnipotent or that China is ineffectual; it simply means that they face very different systemic pressures.

KEY POINTS

- For twenty years, balance of power realists have predicted that great power counterbalancing would soon occur, and bring about multipolarity.
- Predicted great power balancing has not occurred, and there is little evidence that it is about to.
- The United States continues to operate in a permissive systemic environment.

Conclusion: why it matters

To understand the significance of the permissive systemic environment facing the United States, one needs to go beyond today's headlines. Analysts typically reckon US power as the ability to get others to *do* something they otherwise would not have done. They are certainly right that the US often lacks power of this kind: for example, it was unable to end Syria's civil war or to coerce the ousting of Assad; it has been unsuccessful in getting North Korea to relinquish its nuclear weapons; and it has been struggling to get Pakistan to combat al-Qaeda and the Taliban more effectively. But we also to need to keep in mind another way of conceptualizing power: power is also the ability to get others to *not* do something they otherwise would have done. Unipolarity conveys a lot of such 'blocking power' on the US, but we almost never see it. Just because this kind of power cannot be seen does not mean that it is unimportant.

And when the United States does seek to translate its power capabilities into favourable foreign policy outcomes, the international system does not push back against it the way it did against leading powers in the past, and the way it still does against other powers today. As they ponder potential security policies, US decision makers do not confront the prospect that other great powers will construct a counterbalance through alliances or internal efforts. They need not fear escalating 'soft balancing' measures on the part of other powers that would rein the US in and eventually morph into conventional hard balancing. They do not need to worry that other states are in a strong position to use America's links to the global economy strategically to force it to toe their line. They do not need to be apprehensive that failure to cooperate in a given international institution might spoil their government's general reputation for cooperation and thus deny it all the benefits it gets from the institutional order. And they need not worry that if they break some international rule or norm America's overall legitimacy will necessarily be strongly reduced or that its leadership role will come crashing down.

In different combinations, various of these four constraints powerfully shaped the security policies of great powers in the bi- and multipolar systems of the past, and many continue to shape the policies of other powers in the unipolar one of today. Systemic international relations theory, developed by hundreds of scholars over five decades, is not a naked emperor. These theories are often powerful tools for explaining the contours of state behaviour. They just do not apply to the contemporary United States. One way to escape the pervasive 'presentism' of debates about US foreign policy and get a sense of the importance of these constraints is to perform two mental tasks that American international relations scholars often seem reluctant to undertake: think historically and think cross-nationally.

Our book, *World out of Balance*, provides short case studies of previous leading powers with international positions roughly comparable to the United States' today, except that they were in multi- and bipolar international systems: Britain at its nineteenth-century peak and the United States in the latter Cold War. These cases remind readers what it's like to run a great power's foreign policy in the face of systemic constraints like counterbalancing. As noted, the peak Cold War years found the United States devoting a major proportion of its economy to defence. Increases in US military capabilities were predictably and reliably countered—one way or another—by a Soviet superpower with the means and the motive to check America. And during the latter Cold War, US policy

makers considering any major undertaking in most of the world's regions had to reckon the probability that the Soviet Union's formidable military machine might lend its weight to the other side of the scale. Today, by contrast, defence expenditure as a percentage of the economy is roughly half the peak Cold War norm, and increases in US capabilities are not counterbalanced (the combined share of the other major powers' GDP devoted to defence has shrunk since the 1990s). Does this mean the US can do whatever it wants? No. But when the US contemplates an action—e.g. the surge in Afghanistan—it doesn't have to consider what will happen if other major powers put their military power at the disposal of US adversaries.

The bottom line is that as challenging as the world may seem, it would be a whole lot more challenging if the United States had to tackle all the foreign policy problems it faces while also confronting tight systemic constraints. Of course, the US can manage its systemic opportunity wisely or unwisely; the choices Washington makes matter greatly. Because it faces a permissive systemic environment, the United States can potentially avail itself of policy options to better advance its interests that would not otherwise exist. Most notably, the US is now in a favourable position to pursue a policy we call 'systemic activism'—altering the institutions that govern the international system (see Brooks and Wohlforth 2008: 214–18, 2009). And yet, having more foreign policy choices could also enable poor decisions. If the United States truly faced counterbalancing and now had a global rival that was providing military assistance to the Taliban as the United States aided the Mujahedin against the Soviet Union in the early 1980s, then Washington would face a very different calculus about whether to continue its expensive nation-building exercise there. Those who wish for the United States to end its costly commitment to Afghanistan might well wish that it did, in fact, face tight systemic constraints. Regardless, the underlying point is simple: the world is clearly a different place for the United States due to the permissive systemic environment that it faces and in all likelihood will continue to face far into the future. Proper understanding of the consequences of American primacy thus remains imperative.

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ENDNOTES

1. In retrospect, it is apparent that the Soviet Union fell somewhat short of being America's superpower equal. Rather than being a full superpower—except with respect to nuclear weapons—the Soviet Union essentially was a half superpower. While much more potent militarily that the states below it, it never attained economic or technological parity with the United States. For example, at the height of its Cold War power, the Soviet Union's GDP was about 40 per cent of the United States'. Columbia University scholar Serewyn Bialer correctly foresaw that the Soviet Union's economic problems would lead to its collapse, and the end of the pretense that it was a true superpower (Bialer 1986).
2. When one tries to pin down the time-scale of Brooks' and Wohlforth's comment that 'someday' China may catch up to the US, or that American primacy 'will long remain in place', one is shooting at a moving target. In 1999 Wohlforth argued, in essence, that unipolarity would last pretty much forever. In 2008 Brooks and Wohlforth asserted that the US had a twenty-year window of opportunity of uncontested dominance to solidify the post–Second World War international system's institutional framework so that it could outlast unipolarity. Note that ten of those twenty years have already passed.
3. McGill University political scientist Mark Brawley captures the essence of this strategic logic: 'Since economic ties can deliver benefits to both parties, the weaker power might hope to survive in the short-run by allying with the hegemonic power, but add to its current economic base as well. If current economic gains can be converted to military power in the future, the bandwagoning state might improve its power potential so that it could reassert its autonomy at some point in the future' (Brawley 2004).
4. Mearsheimer 2002; Layne 2006.
5. Glenn Kessler, 'Clinton Declares "New Moment" in US Foreign Policy Speech', *Washington Post*, 9 September 2010, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/09/08/AR2010090807133.html.
6. Arvin Subbramanian, 'How We Undervalue China', *Washington Post*, 1 May 2011, A23. On the Peterson Institute for International Economics website, Subbramanian explains his methodology in 'Is China Already Number One? New GDP Estimates', http://www.iie.com/realtime/?p=1935.
7. Over an eleven-year period, the Obama proposal would result in annual cuts averaging about $37 billion. The US spent nearly $550 billion on defence in fiscal year 2011, so the proposed Obama cuts would be well under 10 per cent of that amount.
8. This essay builds upon the analysis in Brooks and Wohlforth (2011).
9. See, for example, Huntington (1999) and Mearsheimer (2001a).
10. The same applies to Afghanistan; see Mearsheimer (2001b) and Posen (2001/2002).
11. In the late 1980s some 750 US savings and loan institutions—akin to building societies in the UK—failed, partly owing to unsound real estate lending. This contributed to major losses in the financial sector and possibly to the deep 1990–91 recession.

You can find a range of online resources to support your learning at www.oup.com/uk/cox_stokes3e/.

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